



## **Training for Kilimanjaro**

The internet is full of training regimens which entail strict, extensive, cross-training programs, featuring hiking, running, biking, swimming, weight training, etc. We believe that such rigorous programs are unnecessary to sufficiently prepare for climbing Kilimanjaro, and may in fact discourage many people who are capable of successfully summiting Kilimanjaro but may not be able to commit for the preparation that is seemingly required. There is no doubt that to reach the summit and to enjoy the 5-7 day trek that you need to be fit and healthy, but the training required should simulate as closely as possible what you will be doing on the mountain, preparing you for walking at altitude for 5-7 hours per day carrying a light pack. This is what we suggest:

### **The best exercise that you can do to prepare for Mount Kilimanjaro is hiking.**

The best and perhaps only exercise you need to do is to hike. Ideally, you should try to hike as much as possible on hills or mountains to simulate ascension on Mount Kilimanjaro. Doing day hikes is superb training. For those who do not have access to trails, but have membership to a gym, you can train very productively on a stair master machine. If you have no access to trails or a gym, then try to walk as much as you can, with extended walks on the weekends.

### **You should start training for climbing Kilimanjaro at least two months prior to your departure.**

If you've never hiked before, you should start with shorter time intervals, a slower pace, and no weight (in your day pack) and then gradually increase all of the above as your fitness level improves. Remember that on Mount Kilimanjaro, you will walk slowly for prolonged periods, and carry probably no more than 5kg in your day pack. Therefore, in your training, it is better to increase the time interval/distance and keep a slow pace than to shorten the time interval/distance and increase the pace. Initially train three times a week, for at least one hour per session, at a minimum. Start off carrying an empty pack and gradually increase the weight you are carrying to double that you will have on the mountain, i.e. to around 10kg. This will help simulate the added difficulty of climbing at altitude. By week six you should aim to do day hikes for four to six hours, with moderate elevation changes (~1,000 ft/305 m) while carrying a 10kg pack. (If you are training on a stair master, aim for 1-2 hours, at 30 steps per minute while carrying a 10kg pack.)

### **Your longest/hardest workouts should be performed two to four weeks before your departure.**

For the last two weeks, you should taper off your training and in the final days, rest so that your body has time to recover before your actual climb. In addition to walking/hiking, you can also supplement your training with any other aerobic activity which you enjoy. It is imperative that during Kilimanjaro training, you wear the boots that you intend to climb with so that they are sufficiently broken-in (to prevent blisters). Additionally, you should wear the day pack you intend to carry so your shoulders/back/hips get used to the points of contact and weight (to minimize chafing and soreness).

### **Adequate preparation is essential if you are going to enjoy your Kilimanjaro trek.**

If you are well prepared physically you will also be well prepared mentally when the going gets tough on the mountain – and it will get tough. Don't underestimate the hardship of 7 days hiking without a shower through mists, rain and ultimately snow, to achieve your goal and reach the summit. As part of your preparation, assess your lifestyle and take the opportunity to change unhealthy habits. Eat more fruits and vegetables. Don't drink or smoke. Get eight hours of sleep per night. Think positively and prepare yourself for a once in a lifetime experience...

***KaribuKilimanjaro!***



*Kilimanjaro*

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