



Project training

All of our projects involve some physical challenge and this one is no exception, so here are some notes to help you prepare.

A project requires a wide range of input from the team, and everyone will find a way of contributing that suits their abilities and skills. However, feeling healthy and prepared for the physical challenges will greatly enhance your enjoyment of all that you do, the people you meet, and your sense of achievement at the end.

What to expect

Here are some common things that crop up on most projects: Also consult the specific notes for your trip, and consider how prepared you think you are:

- **The first couple of days can be very tiring.** What with the long journey, jet lag, the excitement, and the change of environment, people often find the first few days challenging. Starting confident and rested will help you get over this initial hurdle.
- **Manual labour.** Projects are by their nature very physical. There is likely to be plenty of lifting, shifting, shovelling and stretching involved. The more who can contribute to these activities, the better.
- **Long days.** There might be days where you are on the go for 8 hours, so knowing you can comfortably be on your feet and working for that long, is important. Could you get up and do it again the next day?
- **Extremes of temperature.** More often than not our projects mean working in hot, humid conditions. Being used to exercising whilst hot and managing your hydration will make you better prepared and help you cope with the tasks.
- **A little bit of pain.** Be it blisters, sore muscles, sore joints etc, this is normal. If you have done some good training you will be familiar with this and it won't feel so bad if you suffer a bit on the project.
- **Life in a tent.** Enjoying living from a tent takes a certain frame of mind! Why not get some practise with your sleeping bag and a tent?

Don't worry, this isn't a definitive list, but it is an indicator. If you feel you might struggle in some respects, there will be lots of support for you along the way.

Things to do

Consider seeing your doctor

Before you start on a new training programme, it is always a good idea to see your doctor. Take all the trip details with you so the doctor understands what you are going to do. If you or your doctor have any concerns, please contact us. We can deal with most things if we understand your needs well in advance.



Start early

Take some time to work out what kind of preparation you need and plan your training with plenty of time to spare. You decide the exact nature of your preparation. Some people will consider themselves fit enough already, whilst others will know they need to put in a lot of preparation.

Depending on your current fitness, you may wish to start preparing a few months before the trip. If you start early and work within your limits, you will get great results.

A plan, with some goals along the way, will keep you focussed and motivated.

Stamina

Long days of physical work, especially in hotter climates, can be very tiring. Working on your stamina will pay dividends. The best way to do this is to do some regular aerobic exercise. Walking, running, cycling and other similar activities will all help increase your stamina.

As an example, if you can comfortably walk 15 miles in the hills then you will be off to a very good start.

Strength and flexibility

You are likely to find plenty of opportunities to test your muscles and joints! You may want to consider visiting a gym or getting advice from a physiotherapist to tone up that twinge in the back or strengthen a temperamental knee.

You could try improving your strength by adding a weights session to your training programme. Your local gym will advise you on this.

But equally important will be good flexibility. Tight muscles hurt, don't work well, are more prone to injury, and can cause joint problems. Make stretching a habit through your training to improve flexibility in your muscles and joints.

There is lots of information about stretching on the internet. We think this page on Runners World is a good place to start: www.tinyurl.com/2ru9le.

Consider Yoga or Pilates classes in your training. These will help with your flexibility and core stability, and a regular commitment will keep you going.

Eat well

Food and drink are vital elements for training, and during the project. Good food will fuel, maintain, and repair your body.

Fresh, everyday food has all the nutrients and energy you need for a good balanced diet.

We cannot emphasise enough how important it is to drink water and sports drinks before, during and after training, and during the trip. If you don't give your body all the water it needs, it quickly stops working properly.

Work with others

If you think you do need to get into some regular exercise, it really helps to do this with others. Find out if others going on your project live nearby and team up with them, join a gym, a walking club, or similar.



In summary

Enjoy your training. Take your time. Remember, the challenges are not just physical, and everyone on the project will be there to support each other. At times it may be tough, but there is every reason to finish feeling you've done a great thing, and had a great time!

Good luck