



SWS Mountain Guides

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Physical Conditioning

The type of climb, course or expedition you are booking will determine the level of conditioning needed. **Give us a call if you have questions.** You should be in **good to very good to excellent** physical condition, as all our climbs and courses occur at altitude and in the mountain environment. It is **very important** to train and do physical conditioning prior to your course or climb. For advanced level courses or with altitudes above 14,000 ft., a conditioning and training program is **required**. The idea behind any conditioning program is to do some aerobic activity at least 4-6 times a week. Sitting at a desk or behind the steering wheel obviously does not add to your physical health or overall conditioning. We have found that some of our best-conditioned clients do a lot of walking & hiking with and without a pack. Walk or Hike whenever possible. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Ride a bike or walk to work or to the store.

Warning: Before embarking on any exercise or conditioning program, please consult your physician.

Aerobic: It is known that walking 30 minutes each day is a good way to condition for all ages. It is easy, accessible and relaxing. Walking, hiking or jogging with a pack of 20-35 lbs. is an even better way to condition for climbing. To approximate carrying a pack, it is a good idea to work with lightweight (20-35 lbs) in your pack at least once or twice a week while training. According to researchers, running steadily for 20-30 minutes each day, keeping the heart rate up, is far more beneficial than running for speed. The same holds true for all aerobic activity – be it swimming, jogging or bicycling. The idea is to train your heart and lungs to increase your ability to efficiently use oxygen. You should train at a minimum least 4 times a week for moderate courses and 4 to 6 times a week for strenuous courses, with at least 45-60 minutes of exercise each session. It is good to include some hill work, either walking, running, or bicycling. Also good is soft sand, walking or running with a pack up hills or stadium steps or stairs. Use of a Versa-climber or Stairmaster is also good alternative to bad weather days and yes with a pack.

Flexibility: This is an important factor in any outdoor activity. Stretching exercises are very important and should be added to any conditioning program. A few minutes each day of bending and gently stretching will add to your overall conditioning. Training Levels

Level I - GOOD Conditioning: Ice Ax Clinics, Day Tours, Rock Clinics ; Plan to exercise at least 3 times a week for at least 20-30 minutes each session. Plus, plan to hike or walk with your day pack a couple of weekends before the trip. Include walking on hilly terrain once a week.

Level II- VERY GOOD Conditioning: Basic Winter Mountaineering, Shasta Climbs/ Mt. Whitney Summer Ascents, Sierra Nevada Summer Mountaineering, Tech Ice & Rock; Plan to train at least 4-6 times a week for at least 40-50 plus minutes each session in one of the following categories or a mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair or elliptical machines. It is also a good idea to include in your workout some type of flexibility training 3 times a week (stretching for at least 10 minutes). Plan on including hikes or walks on hilly terrain with your pack weekly for overall conditioning.

Level III - EXCELLENT Conditioning: Winter/Spring Shasta Climbs/ Mt. Whitney Winter Ascents, Sierra Nevada Mountaineering, Ski/ Snowboarding; Training at least 4-6 times per week for at least 40-60 plus minutes each session in one of the following categories or a mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair or ski machines. Include in your workout some type of flexibility training 3 times a week (stretching for at least 10 minutes). Plan on including at least 2 hour weekend training hikes and climbs with your loaded pack for overall conditioning. Running or walking stairs or stadium bleachers is excellent training for climbing and mountaineering.

Level IV- EXCELLENT EXPEDITION Conditioning: Expedition Training; Level IV training required 6 times per week for at least 4 days at 40-60 minutes each session, 2 days at 60 -120 minutes each session, in one of the following categories or mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair master, or other aerobic activities. It is also a good idea to include in your workout some type of flexibility training 3 times a week (stretching for at least 15 minutes). Plan on including 4-hour weekend training hikes and climbs with your loaded pack for over all conditioning (can count as a 60-120 minute session). Other activities which will improve your conditioning for the expedition include; weight training for strength, versa-climber, jogging with a light day-pack, and running stairs or hills. v16.0