

Backpacking



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What is Backpacking?

- An outdoor pastime which is popular in many parts of the world.
- Backpacking involves hiking to a camping location while carrying a pack which contains food and gear for the hikers.
- Backpacking usually involves at least one night of outdoor camping, but can last for months if hikers replenish their supplies along the way.

“Back”ground

- Travelers have camped and used packs for centuries. In 1914, the word “backpack” in reference to a travel pack first appeared in America. Overnight camping expeditions became a common recreation during the First World War because backpacking was inexpensive and pleasurable. After the war, backpacking continued to be a popular way to experience nature.

Where to Backpack?

- An individual can backpack really anywhere across the world.
- Many areas have established trails such as:
 - Pacific Crest Trail
 - Appalachian Trail*
 - Assateague National Seashore (VA)
 - Great Falls Park (VA)
 - Europe is very popular



Appalachian Trail

- In the 1920s work began on the Appalachian Trail, a hiking trail which ultimately spanned more than 2,000 miles (3,218 kilometers) of the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.
- Some hikers spend a summer trying to hike the full length of the trail, known as thru-hiking.



What is in a Backpack?



Training Overview

- Backpacking involves a combination of training for specific fitness qualities, doing sport specific outings and practicing sport required skill elements. There are five major fitness qualities your general training should focus on for Backpacking.
 - Those qualities are:
 - Aerobic Endurance
 - Anaerobic Endurance
 - Upper Body Strength
 - Lower Body Strength
 - Flexibility



Suitable Baseline Training

- 2 to 4 weeks of at least 4 weekly workouts, including 2 strength workouts of at least 30 minutes each, two cardiovascular workouts (a 45-minute workout at 65-75% MHR and a higher intensity 30-minute workout at 75-85% MHR), and one sport-specific hike of at least 4 miles that involves an elevation gain of at least 700 feet and a pack weight up to 10 pounds. Suitable aerobic training options include walking stairs or hills; exercising on the incline treadmill, elliptical trainer, stair-climber, or StepMill; or hiking.

Beginner Backpacking

- Allow 6 weeks to train for an overnight trip up to 10 miles round trip and elevation gain less than 2,000 feet. Beyond baseline training for beginner hikes, be sure to include at least one back-to-back outing a few weeks before your first trip to determine how you feel with repeat exertion on successive days.



Intermediate Backpacking

- An intermediate backpack would include a 3-night trip in the Grand Canyon that involves a rim-to-rim hike with a 35-pound pack over varied terrain and a 5,000-foot elevation gain. A suitable hiking foundation would start with someone being able to hike 8 miles carrying a 20 pound pack on a hike with 3000 feet of elevation gain. Allow 3 months and at least one shorter overnight or back-to-back to test out gear, boots and pack weight distribution.





Backpacking in Schools



- Some schools use backpacking trips as a way to orient and bond with new students.
- Backpacking usually involves a high level of cooperation and interdependence, as all members of the group rely on each other for support.
- Backpackers must be aware of all members of the group, making sure that no one is lagging behind or feeling unwell.
- Once a campsite is reached, backpackers usually break up necessary tasks such as pitching tents and cooking.

Great Backpacking Website

- <http://www.backpacker.com/backpacking101/>
- Trip-planning tips, gear lists, safety advice, and other essential wisdom every hiker should know.

