



A COLORADO TRAIL FOUNDATION PROGRAM
provided by **Colorado Mountain Expeditions**

Getting Into Shape For Your Trek:

Thank you for your interest in the treks on The Colorado Trail. We would like to remind you that all of our trekking sections are relatively arduous. **You need to be serious about getting in condition to hike!** This letter offers some guidelines to achieve that objective.

We want you to enjoy your trek on The Colorado Trail, but in order to do that **you MUST be in good physical shape**. The better shape you are in, the happier your body will be and the more fun you will have. You will not be able to “get in shape on the trail”. That doesn’t work well and it’s hard on your body, spirit and hiking companions. We have had hikers arriving at camp after dark, exhausted, in pain and unhappy. This creates a dangerous situation for you, the other trekkers, and the staff.

Please plan ahead and get in good hiking condition NOW! Every section on The Colorado Trail has at least one advanced day, so you need to be prepared. Remember that most of The Colorado Trail starts at 9,000 ft. and goes UP!!! **If you are coming from a lower altitude, try to come to Colorado two to three days early to become acclimated.** At high altitude, your heart and lungs must work harder to get enough oxygen into your body. You tire more quickly, your body slows down, and your muscles can stiffen. This can easily ruin what was to be a good experience.

We all have busy schedules, and sometimes it is hard to fit in a workout, but it can be accomplished. Walk as much as you can on a daily basis. Find a co-worker who would like to walk with you on your lunch hour. Take an aerobics or spin class. Ride a bike. Jog. Swim. Be as active as you can! Every little bit helps. Work out at least 4 days a week for 6 weeks prior to your trek departure. Devote your weekends or days off to longer workouts. Make sure you can comfortably hike as many miles as the longest day on your CT week. Put your day hiking gear and 3 liters of water into your day pack and climb hills, exposing yourself to as much altitude as possible. Your Colorado Trail trek will be a fun, yet physically demanding adventure. Please do your part to help make your trek as safe as possible for everyone involved.

Your Action Plan For A Well-Prepared Week:

1. **WATER:** Drink plenty of water during all of these activities. Being hydrated will help you think clearly and alleviate sore muscles. Do not wait until you are thirsty before drinking. Take a drink of water at regular intervals. By the time you are thirsty, you could already be in trouble.

2. **FOOTWARE:** One of the first things to do is to break in your boots/trail shoes. If you have a pair you are planning to use, check them carefully. If you need to replace them, do it now. Hiking in a pair of fairly new boots can be painful and blister producing. You can wear them around the house, on your lunch hour walk, or at any other time. Gradually wear them for longer and longer periods. Get your boots soaking wet and then walk in them. This will help them to form to your feet. You MAY choose to bring 2 pairs of boots, to use on alternating days.

3. **SPEED:** Your goal is to be able to hike at a 2 to 3 miles per hour rate, carrying weight and going up and down hills. Start slowly so you do not get sore or pull muscles. Be pleasantly tired, but not exhausted. Push your limits every day and you will be surprised how quickly you expand your hiking ability.

4. **DURATION:** Start out hiking one hour a day and build up to 3-4 hours a day, with more hours on weekends. Most treks are 6 to 8 hours each day, so you must be prepared for longer hikes. Note: you should be working out four days a week for 6 weeks prior to your trek departure.

5. **WEIGHT:** Put about 10 pounds in your backpack when beginning your conditioning schedule. Gradually build the weight up to 20 lbs.

6. **CONSISTENCY:** Walk **EVERY** day. Hike **EVERY** weekend. Consistency and frequently builds stamina gradually so you do not injure yourself.

7. **HIKE HILLS!** Train on hills, stairs, or whatever is available. For Section 6 or 7, increase your pack weight to 25 lbs. Plan more extended climbs with steeper inclines.

If you would like to take a rest day during your trek week, just let us know. You are welcome to ride with the crew. It is best to not hike a day if you feel overtired, have foot problems or need a break. You do not want to become a danger to yourself or others.

Finally, enjoy your hike. Don't feel rushed if others hike faster than you. This is not a competition. Hike at a comfortable pace, but don't plan to take a nap on the trail, especially on a long day. We get an early start in order to avoid afternoon thunder and lightening storms. It is nice to get to camp early enough to relax, have a shower, socialize, and set up your tent before dinner.