



Mexican Volcanoes Pico de Orizaba and La Malinche Training Plan

The best exercise you can do to prepare for trekking on the Mexican Volcanoes is trekking and cross training. Start training at least four to six months prior to your departure. Early and proper training will allow your body to gradually increase strength, avoid potential injury and reduce aches and pains on the mountain. In addition to trekking at various elevations, other forms of aerobic training and weight training should be a part of your overall training plan.

Trekking is about endurance and stamina. You have to be able to walk 2-4 hours with a 25 - 50 lb. backpack, filled with food and supplies for the mountain, to the next higher camp on two specific days. A strong body is essential for this type of trekking and there is a good possibility you will be walking with crampons through snow. Your body will fatigue more easily as you ascend to higher elevations.

- **Legs** - Strong, conditioned legs make it easier to walk uphill and downhill for sustained periods of time and protects the knees.
- **Core** - Core strength helps stabilize the entire body and supports hips, back and all muscles in the midsection. This is your center of gravity, where all body movements begin.
- **Back and Shoulders** – Upper body strength prevents fatigue while carrying a weighted backpack.
- **Aerobic Fitness** – Aerobic strength allows the body to function efficiently with less oxygen. A trained body is more likely to withstand the stress of consecutive days of trekking and camping at high altitude.
- **Positive Mental Attitude** – Positive attitude work wonders for you when you are fatigued and out of your comfort zone.

Early Training Benefits

- Allows you to try different types of boots and socks and make certain the fit is proper, are comfortable and will not give you blisters.
- Allows time to be familiar with your gear. Each climber should know how the gear works and that it fits properly.
- Allows time to take some days off of training to allow the body to recover. Build up to 5 days of training with 2 days of rest.

Training Suggestions

1. Start your training early. This will help prevent injuries and you can gradually increase your training.
2. Lace up your trekking boots and start trekking! Aim for 2 treks each week and increase to 3-4 treks on different terrains at differing altitudes.
3. Trek a minimum of 60 minutes per trek. Gradually build up the length of time on your feet and distance covered.
4. Set your goal to be able to trek four to six hours, with moderate elevation changes (1,000ft/305m).
5. As you get stronger, add a backpack and gradually increase the carry weight until you are comfortable carrying a minimum of 25lbs/11.34kg.
6. If you are not trekking, you should be doing aerobic training 3-4 times each week. Begin with a slow pace and gradually increase as your fitness level improves.
7. On some training days, shorten the time interval or distance and increase the pace for a maximum of 30-45 minutes, as hard as you can go; almost to the point of exhaustion!
8. Try to trek at higher altitudes to see how your body responds to altitude.
9. Increase your training by combining two different cardio sessions in the same day.
10. Proper nutrition is important during the training months. Consider working with a nutritionist.
11. Rest days are as important as training days. This will allow your body to heal and be ready for the next hard training day.

12. Focus on weak areas – The Mexico Volcanoes will find your weakest area! The descent, in particular, will put strain on your knees, back, and hips. Include a specific strength program to eliminate problems in these areas.
13. Stretching needs to be part of your training.

In Phoenix area, Camelback and Squaw Peak Mountains are great areas for training treks for this length of time. Time yourself on your favorite trail and try to improve with every workout. You will see improvement! Talk with us about higher altitude training treks in other States.

Alternative outdoor aerobic training

- Hill running
- Road running
- Cycling
- Nordic skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Swimming
- Speed walking
- HIIT - High Intensity Interval Training

Indoor aerobic training

- Stairmaster (or a similar machine that resembles stepping up). Begin with 15 minutes with a goal for 1-2 hours. Set it to 30 steps per minute.
- Treadmill: Increase the incline for uphill walking
- Exercise bike: Select a hill program
- Jacob's Ladder
- Spin Class

Set your goal to increase distance and pace. As you get stronger, wear your boots and backpack when appropriate.

Resistance training –Think strong back, core, legs and buttocks! (Minimum of 2 times per week)

- Incline leg press
- Forward and backward walking lunges
- Squats
- Box step ups and step downs
- Standing calve raises
- Pushups/pushdowns
- Crunches and planks
- Reverse grip pull down
- Core work, such as hovers or planks
- Farmer's walk

Flexibility – Increased flexibility will reduce stiffness from a long day of trekking. Daily stretching should be included in your training program.

- Hamstrings
- Quads
- Calves
- Shoulder
- Hip flexors
- IT band

Trekking poles are highly recommended to use on the volcanoes. Use your poles during your training treks.

Consult a personal trainer before beginning any exercise program and/or for specific exercises best suited for your ability level.

Go online to research weight training specific for strenuous trekking. This will be helpful to understand the suggested exercises listed above.

Prior to trekking, make sure your backpack and waist belt are properly fitted for your body.

Refer to the K2AT packing list for a complete list of gear for your trek.

The exercises listed above are to be used as a guide to prepare you for your high altitude trek. It is up to you to select a program that best suits your ability, lifestyle and where you live. Feel free to contact Kevin Cherilla at kevin@k2adventures.org for questions relating to your training.

If you reach your training goals, you're ready for the real thing.