



Tanzania Mt. Kilimanjaro Training Plan

The best exercise you can do to prepare for Mt. Kilimanjaro is trekking. Start training at least three to four 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, other forms of aerobic training and weight training should be a part of your overall training plan.

Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro is about endurance and stamina. You have to be able to walk with a 10-15 lb. or 4.5-9 kg. backpack for up to 8 hours a day, for seven days. A strong body is essential for this type of trekking. There are a few demanding sections on each day. Summit day will be a minimum of 10-12 hours on your feet.

- **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
- **Positive Mental Attitude** – Positive attitude work wonders for you when you are fatigued and out of your comfort zone.

If you've never trekked before, visit a reputable outdoor/trekking/running store. They can assist you with selecting a proper trekking boot to fit your foot. We suggest both a low-rise and a hi-rise waterproof trekking boot. Early training will allow you time to find the best fitting boots.

Lace up your trekking boots and start trekking! Aim for 3-4 treks each week. 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.

Training Suggestions

1. Trek a minimum of 60 minutes per trek. Gradually build up the length of time on your feet and distance covered.
2. Set your goal to be able to trek four to six hours, with moderate elevation changes (1,000ft/305m).
3. As you get stronger, add a backpack and gradually increase the carry weight until you are comfortable carrying a minimum of 15lbs/6.8kg.
4. 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!

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!

Alternative outdoor aerobic training

- Hill running
- Road running
- Cycling
- Nordic skiing
- Swimming
- Speed walking

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

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

Resistance training –Think strong back, 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

Focus on weak areas – Mt. Kilimanjaro 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.

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 you 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.

Trekking poles are highly recommended to use on Mt. Kilimanjaro. 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 trekking. This will be helpful to understand the suggested exercises listed above.

Prior to trekking, make sure your backpack and waist belt is 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 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.