



Grand Canyon Rim to Rim Training Plan

The best exercise you can do to prepare for the Grand Canyon is hiking. 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 trail. In addition to hiking, other forms of aerobic training and weight training should be a part of your overall training plan.

Hiking the Grand Canyon is about endurance and stamina. The trail's distance is 25 miles. You will be hiking this in one day over approximately 12-15 hours. A strong body is essential for this duration. You will be encouraged to take a small break every hour.

- **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** – Allows the body to function efficiently under exertion.
- **Positive Mental Attitude** - Can work wonders for you when fatigued and out of your comfort zone.

If you've never hiked before, visit a reputable outdoor/hiking/running store. They can assist you will selecting a proper hiking shoe/boot to fit your foot. We suggest getting low to mid-rise hiking shoes/boots. Early training will allow you time to find the best fitting boot.

Lace up your hiking shoe/boots and start hiking! If you are not able to hike regularly, you should be doing another version of aerobic training. Begin with a slow pace and gradually increase as your fitness level improves. Aim for 3-4 hikes each week, if possible

Hiking/Aerobic Training Suggestions

1. Hike a minimum of 60 minutes per session. Gradually build up the length of time on your feet and distance covered.
2. Set your goal to be able to hike up to at least four to six hours.
3. Hike with moderate elevation changes (1,000ft/305m).
4. As you get stronger, add a backpack but the weight does not need to exceed 10 lbs.
5. On some training days, shorten the time interval/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 hikes for this length of time. Time yourself on your favorite trail and try to improve with every workout. You will see improvement!

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 hiking. Daily stretching should be included in your training program.

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

Focus on weak areas – The Grand Canyon 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 hiker 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 for your hike in the Grand Canyon. They should be used during your training hikes.

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 hiking. This will be helpful to understand the suggested exercises listed above.

Prior to hiking, 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 hike.

The exercises listed above are to be used as a guide to prepare you for your hike. 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.