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90-Day Pre-Expedition Training Program by Brian Prax

You can contact Brian for more training tips, or have him design a custom training program to fit your needs and goals, training@visionquestjourneys.com

Weeks 1-3: Gain Base Fitness Level

3-4 days per week cardio training (run, hike, bike, swim, xc ski). Do these at a moderate level of exertion for increasing lengths of time per session, starting at 45 min, increasing over the 3 week period to 2-3 hour sessions. Take a day off in between sessions, but no more than 2 days off in a row. 2-3 days per week strength training with focus on legs and torso. Things like squats, lunges, leg press, hamstring curls, calf raises, and stairmaster at slow speed with a pack on are a good place to start. Do 2 - 4 sets per session of as many repetitions as you can do to the point of fatigue. Adjust the weight/resistance so that you are doing around 30 repetitions by the time you reach fatigue. Take between 1 and 3 days off between sessions.

Weeks 4-8: Increase Sport Specific Fitness

Gradually increase to 5-6 days per week of cardio training, with minimum of 2 hours per day with occasional 4+ hour sessions. Make training more specific to what you will be doing on the trip = going up and down hills with a pack on. When this is not an option, continue with things that use the muscles in a similar fashion like biking and getting on the stairmaster as opposed to running and swimming. Keep up the same strength training, increasing the weight to the point where you achieve fatigue at 20 repetitions. Strength training can be phased out if your other training is very sport specific and you gain strength from it (e.g. the ole up and down the hill with a pack thing- great strength and cardio at the same time).

Weeks 9-11: Maintain High Fitness Level

Most people can decrease their exercise frequency to 3-4 times per week at this point and maintain if not still gain fitness. This is a great time to put in 1 or 2 days per week of almost all day (6+ hours on and off) training sessions to get your body ready for all day every day on the trip.

Week 12: Taper

Take it easy this week and let your body fortify itself. Train by doing 2 days of easy 1-2 hour cardio workouts and eat a lot of what you are supposed to be eating. Get used to hydrating as much as you can and kick back and get excited about your trip and how much more fun you will have now that you are fit for it.