

WALKING SPECIAL

Whether you want to hike Cradle Mountain, trek the Camino trail or join a walk to raise money for your favourite charity, good preparation and planning is essential. Here, Di Westaway, founder of Wild Women on Top and Coastrek explains how you can get started...

BUILD YOUR TEAM

I've learnt the hard way that teamwork is essential for a wonderful adventure. You build a good team by agreeing to a few basic rules, like being prepared – both in fitness and with your gear – taking a positive approach, and focusing on your strengths while leaping out of your comfort zone... together.

BEGIN YOUR PREPARATIONS

It's best to allow at least three months to prepare for a challenging expedition or a 30 to 60km charity hike. You need to build up gradually, particularly if your hike requires you to carry all your gear, including food and tents, on your back.

If you choose a long-distance hiking adventure, you should build up by starting with a 5km hike, then add 2 to 3km every weekend until you can easily manage the daily trekking distance of your expedition. And if you've chosen an altitude hike like Machu Picchu, integrate some interval training on hills, soft sand and stairs to get your heart and lungs fit for climbing.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM

Write yourself a 12-week training program where you do two, two-hour hikes midweek then a biggie on the weekend. Or choose a charity walk where the registration fee covers a training program so you get help along the way. And if all that fails, sign up to an online program like Luvmyhike (luvmyhike.com), or get yourself a personal trainer to assist in your preparation.

PREVENT INJURIES

Injury prevention is all about cross-training – doing hills, stairs and soft sand, to get hike fit. Balance this with yoga, a swim and a massage after a big session.

WALKING WITH MATES IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR

TRAIN AS A GROUP

The fitter you are, the more fun you'll have on a hike, but training is more fun in a group. Reach out to your friends, tell them they'll feel awesome from the training and even better when they embark on a wanderlust adventure and just do it. Science proves that you'll be fitter, happier and healthier by hiking together for fun.

EAT FRESH FOOD

To prepare for a trek, the best diet is to eat real food, mostly plants, and avoid processed food and sugar. Basically, you want a scientifically proven diet for an active lifestyle, like the Mediterranean diet, which has been shown to give you lots of energy for adventurous days.

WALK FOR A CAUSE

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CHARITY WALKS AND TREKS AT: OXFAM TRAILWALKER TRAILWALKER.OXFAM.ORG.AU, COASTREK COASTREK.COM.AU, HUMA CHARITY CHALLENGE HUMACHARITYCHALLENGE.COM, INSPIRED ADVENTURES INSPIREDADVENTURES.COM.AU, GREAT WALKS GREATWALKS.COM.AU.

LOOK AFTER YOUR FEET

Choosing comfortable waterproof leather or Gore-Tex boots and training in them prior to your expedition is essential. If you're doing a hot pilgrim walk or a wilderness hike, think about the best kind of shoe for the surfaces you'll encounter. Blisters are a challenge in hot weather or on hard surfaces, but hiking boots with ankle support are best for remote adventures.

The best prevention is to train as much as possible in similar conditions using the boots you want to take. And in case you get it wrong once on the hike, take some New Zealand 'foot fleece' and pawpaw cream, as well as fixation tape, in your pack. To prevent friction rubs you can then tape your feet.

WHAT TO CARRY IN YOUR DAY SAC

- ✓ WATER BOTTLE
- ✓ SUNSCREEN AND A HAT
- ✓ INSECT REPELLENT
- ✓ MELALEUCA (TEA TREE) OIL (CAN BE USED DILUTED AS AN ANTISEPTIC)
- ✓ ALL-PURPOSE CLEANSER
- ✓ ANTI-CHAFING CREAM
- ✓ WET TRAVEL WIPES
- ✓ 'FOOT FLEECE' AND FIXATION TAPE
- ✓ TRAIL MIX OR PROTEIN BALLS



Thermos 530 ml Stainless Steel Hydration Bottle, \$39.99, thermos.com.au.



J'ADERMA No-Rinse Cleansing Foam 150ml, \$14.95, from amcal.com.au or chemistwarehouse.com.au.



Anti-chafing Cream, Calmmé 40g, \$24.95, lajoieskin.com.

HOW TO GET IN SHAPE FOR A CHARITY WALK OR HIKING HOLIDAY

DI'S SIGNATURE MOVE: THE HIGH-ALTITUDE HANDSTAND.

Di Westaway, from Wild Women on Top and Coastrek, has inspired more than 25,000 people to get into hiking, as well as raising over \$20 million for charity.



TRAIN FOR A TREK