



LARAPINTA PHYSICAL CONDITIONING GUIDE

The sections of the Larapinta Trail that we will be walking are rugged and steep in parts and often open to the sun. Average temperatures during June are approx 20-25C but can plunge to below zero at night. In total, we will walk approximately 100Km of the Larapinta Trail, over its most scenic sections (including side trips).

Daily distances will vary between 12-15kms on average and up to 26kms on the longest day. Longer days will be on flatter terrain but most days will involve some hills and gorges. On an average day we will walk between 6-9hrs (including breaks)

It will be very cold at night time but you will have a tent provided. However, make sure you bring a warm sleeping bag and warm clothes for around camp.

You will need to carry the usual stuff in your daypack, as well as an extra layer in case of cold conditions and also extra water, as water will be scarce between campsites. This means that you may be carrying 7-10kg and will need to be conditioned for carry this load up and down hills.

With all treks it is important to be as specifically conditioned as possible for the unique challenges that you will encounter.

In addition to the aerobic fitness required; the constant stresses and strains on the muscles and joints of the feet, ankles, legs, knees, hips and back require specific conditioning. The Larapinta Trail has a lot of loose rock sections which can put extra strain on ankles and knees so we highly recommend training on natural surfaces in the hills.

The following recommendations provide a guide to the conditioning you will need in the last 12 weeks prior to the trip.

To start with, gradually increase the amount of time that you walk each day. Eventually you want to be able to walk for at least 6 hours carrying a 10kg pack.

You can build up to this over the next 4-5 months, so be careful not to over do it early in the piece.

If you progress gradually and listen to your body you'll get to the starting line in good nick which will minimise the probability of any problems during the trek.

Strength and Flexibility

Apart from having the endurance to walk for 6-9hrs a day for 6 days, you'll also need good strength and flexibility to avoid injuries such as sprains, strains and overuse injuries.

These can be minimised by doing some daily stretching and strengthening your muscles and joints by making sure you do a bushwalk or two each week with at least 7kgs on your back to start with and then gradually increase to 10kg.

Squats, sit ups, push ups are also good for improving overall strength.

Note: Quarter Squats on one leg while balancing, are great for strengthening the muscles that stabilise the knee joint. Stretching the muscles that connect the hip to the lateral side of the knee will also help to prevent knee soreness.

Balance

Balance is best developed by doing lots of bushwalking in the hills, especially tracks that are not graded and where you may need to scramble over rocks and creeks – the steeper the better.

Balance also refers to balance in your training. Make sure you intersperse hard and easy days and allow for adequate rest too – especially if you are out of condition.

A Word of Warning

Don't increase intensity too soon as this may lead to injury and you'll be back where you started.

The last thing you want is to train too intensely early on and have to nurse a chronic injury while trying to increase your fitness.

Dealing with setbacks

The most common setback will be an injury or illness. The risk of this happening can be minimised by looking after yourself. Eg; having a balanced training schedule, good time management, being organised, making time for rest and relaxation, eating well and not abusing your body.

If you do have an illness or injury that sets you back a week or two, don't panic. Seek treatment as soon as possible, rest a few days and then ease yourself back into it.

Suggested Routine 12 Weeks Leading up to the trek

Week 1-2

- 2 x 1hr walks carrying 7kgs max
- 2 x 30min recovery walks or bike rides (no weight)
- 1 x 2hr bushwalk carrying 7kg max – not too steep!

Strength and flexibility exercises each day.

Week 3-4

- 2 x 1hr walks carrying 7kgs max
- 2 x 45min walks carrying 10kg max – no steep hills!
- 1 x 4hr bushwalk carrying 10kg max – not too steep

Keep doing strength and flexibility exercises each day.

Week 5-6

- 2 x 2hr walks carrying 8kgs max
- 2 x 45min walks carrying 10kg max – no steep hills!
- 1 x 4hr bushwalk carrying 10kg max – not too steep

Keep doing strength and flexibility exercises each day.

Weeks 7-11

- 2 x 2hr walks carrying 10kgs max
- 2 x 45min walks carrying 10kg max – no steep hills!
- 1 x 6hr bushwalk carrying 10kg max – not too steep

Keep doing strength and flexibility exercises each day.

Week 12

- 2 x 30min recovery walk/bike or swim (no weight) and early in the week.
- Have a massage!!
- Taper your training...Rest, Rehydrate and Relax

For each training session - make sure you are wearing and carrying the same gear you'll have on the track. *If you have an opportunity to walk in the rain, do so to test out your gear.

Tapering

During the week prior to the trek it will be important to back off, rest up and refresh your body, so that you are feeling recharged and ready to go without being fatigued or sore.

Only do a couple of short walks, rides or swims and have a massage to loosen up your muscles. Make sure you eat & drink especially well the week before you go and get a good night's sleep.

Good luck with your preparation and please don't hesitate to give us a call if you experience even the smallest sign of an injury. **Phone 0414410963** gabrielle@freespiritadventures.com.au