

Philmont Training Tips (from REI)

The treks at Philmont require you to be in top physical shape. The combination of a 10-day backpacking trip with each day ranging from 8-15 miles carrying a 35-40 lb. pack at high altitudes make this a demanding trip. Any scout, young or old, is capable of doing and enjoying a Philmont trek if he trains for it. Below are some training recommendations.

For boys who are participating in a spring sport at school (soccer, track, baseball):

1. Practice with your team every day as required by your coach, including any weight training recommended.
2. One day every week load up your pack and hike from 4-8 miles on local trails, the more elevation change the better. Start with 20 lbs. and lower mileage and work up to a heavier pack and longer miles.

For boys and adults not participating in sports:

1. Do some form of exercise for 1 hour 5 days a week. Work out in a gym or do strength training a couple of those days; hike in your neighborhood with a pack, or go for a run. The idea is to develop both cardiovascular fitness and strength. Start off slowly doing less time or carrying less weight and gradually build up to at least an hour, carrying 35-40 lbs. Be sure to wear your boots when possible.
2. One day every week load up your pack and hike from 4-8 miles on local trails, the more elevation change the better. Start with 20 lbs. and lower mileage and work up to a heavier pack and longer miles.

For the whole crew:

1. Plan at least 3 shakedown backpacking trips which all crew members need to attend. The first can be a one night trip of about 15 miles round trip. This is the time to try out different combinations of clothing and equipment, learn how to work as a crew, learn the map and compass skills, cooking and clean up skills, and other skills needed for the trip.
2. The second trip should be a two-night trip of 20-25 miles. This will give you an idea of what it is like to get up each morning, pack up, hike, set up camp, and repeat it the next day. This is also the time to decide on what equipment you need as a crew, and practice working as a crew. It will also tell you whether your training has been effective, and if you need to ramp it up.
3. The third trip should be a month or so before your trek, hopefully after school gets out. This is the trek that is really important. It should be at least 2 nights, covering 25+ miles, preferably in hilly or mountainous terrain. The boys should lead this trip from start to finish, with the crew leader assigning jobs, and overseeing the whole crew. Take exactly what you plan to bring on your trek; this is the time to be sure you have everything you need and are not carrying extra weight.

Other tips

1. Personal gear: If you do not use it every day, do not bring it! The exception to this rule is raingear and you cold weather gear. Remember though it is hot here in July, it will be 10-20 degrees cooler at Philmont.
2. Be sure to wear your boots as much as possible. You will soon learn what problems you have with your feet and can plan to bring whatever moleskin or first aid treatments you need.
3. Train with your buddies, it is more fun. Reward yourself every week as part of your training. Hike to the local ice cream shop, run to McDonald's for lunch, occasionally take an extra day off, whatever floats your boat.
4. Stop training the week before you leave. Take the week off and rest, you will have earned it.
5. This is a group trip! The boys are in charge. The adults are just members of the crew. You will determine whether you have fun on this trip or not. The better everyone is prepared and the more willing everyone is to share in the work, the more fun you will have.