



OPEN GOLD DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS 2021

Guidance for a successful expedition

Taking part in a Gold DofE expedition is a demanding, but achievable, challenge, and one that you will provide you with a huge sense of achievement when completed. To make sure that you are well prepared physically, we've pulled together some guidance to help you plan a training regime that will be effective and works for you.



wilderness expertise

FITNESS AND TRAINING

Your Gold DofE expeditions require you to take part in 8 hours of activity over 4 days. Whilst you won't necessarily be hiking for all of these 8 hours, you will be on your feet for much of this time, and carrying a heavy pack. It is therefore highly recommended that you do some training and physical preparation for your expedition, to increase both your enjoyment and success.

The amount of training you need to do will of course be dependent on your current fitness level, and experience in taking part in multi-day hiking, but we can provide some general guidance to help you identify what areas you may need to work on.

- Make sure that you have broken in your walking boots. Start off with shorter local walks, and gradually build these up in distance and time.
- You should try and get out into the countryside on uneven terrain to get a feel for walking on rough ground. You will find this makes long-distance walking both slower, more tiring and it is more demanding on the body. Your feet will likely move around more than when walking on pavements, and you may find some new areas that rub (e.g., the ankle support) which you want to address before the expedition.
- Make sure that you practice walking with a loaded pack. Again, you can gradually build the weight up, but by the time you take part in your practice expedition you should have been for a day walk with a fully loaded pack, so you know what to expect. And feel confident that you can do this for another 3 days! The practice of carrying the weight and the reality of this will also help make packing light easier!

You may well take part in team or individual sports and have a high level of fitness already. But most sporting activities and games take place over approx. 60-90 minutes, which is quite a different physical challenge to walking for 8 hours for 4 days in a row. Therefore, even if you have good fitness levels, it is advisable to include some regular periods of walking over rough ground carrying a pack in your training schedule to build up your stamina and strength steadily to avoid injury.

If you don't already do physical activity of some sort, now is the time to start! Cramming this kind of training too close to the expedition is not wise, so start well in advance of the expedition (at least 12 weeks is advisable). As well as doing the above walking, you should consider doing other activities alongside this which will improve your cardiovascular fitness and strength. Muscular endurance or cardiovascular fitness can be achieved through exercise: running, cycling, dancing, racquet sports, swimming etc. There are also lots of free classes available online that can be done from the comfort of your own home. Choose an activity that you enjoy, plan a program, set goals and keep a record of your training so that you will be encouraged by your progress.

