



Preparing for Hiking Adventures

The Northwest has an abundance of hiking and backpacking routes. Hiking is a terrific way to spend a day with friends or family, view new scenery, breath fresh air, and get a great workout. Like any other activity, preparation for the task will reduce the chance of injury. Let your physical therapist guide you in how to get ready.

Strength and Flexibility

Hip, thigh, and ankle strength are especially important in preparation for hiking. The enclosed example exercises will help you prepare your leg muscles. Stretching after warming up or when taking a break during your hike can help to prevent cramping or muscle strains. Consider using a walking stick or hiking poles for steep descents if you have any knee discomfort, as this will aide balance stability and assist in “controlling” your descent down a hill.

Aerobic Conditioning

Daily energy expenditure for hikers/backpackers can compare to elite cyclists, endurance runners, and triathletes. While pacing yourself, the slow and long endurance of a good hike can burn up to 60% fat. To prepare, a progressive aerobic routine could include walking or using an elliptical or stair climber machine 15-20 minutes, progressing to 50-60 minutes 3-5 times a week. Increase your duration gradually, about 5 minutes/week. If you plan on backpacking, wearing a 10-15 lb pack while training is an excellent idea.

Hydration

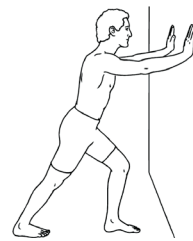
Plan on carrying a minimum of 2 liters of water per day. Drink before you are thirsty and continue even after you no longer feel thirsty to prevent dehydration illnesses. You can lose anywhere from 0.5-1.5 liters of water per hour during a strenuous activity.

Prevention

Clean, dry skin with proper sock/shoe ventilation and well-fitting shoes (usually coming above ankle for support on uneven terrain) are good starting points. Consider moleskin or second skin products to prevent blisters at known “hot spots,” and make sure your hiking shoes are broken in before your big trip.

Whether your destination takes you for an easy stroll or on a vigorous climb, you will be physically and mentally prepared to have an awesome trip.

STRETCHING: GASTROC



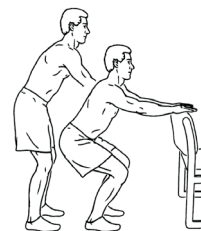
Stand with right foot back, leg straight, forward leg bent. Keeping heel on floor, turned slightly out, lean into wall until stretch is felt in calf. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg. Do 3-5 times per set, 1 set per session.

STRETCHING: QUADRICEPS



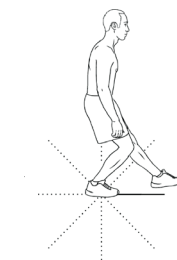
Pull right heel toward buttock until stretch is felt in front of thigh. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat with other leg. Do 3-5 times per set, 1 set per session.

CHAIR SQUAT



Keeping feet flat on floor, shoulder width apart, squat no lower than knee height or what is comfortable. Use support as necessary. Avoid knees going forward past toes. Do 20 times per set, 1-3 sets per session.

SINGLE LEG BALANCE AND REACH



Stand on right leg. Reach along A direction with opposite leg and return 10 times. Repeat with other leg. Keep foot close to ground without touching and reach as far as you can without losing balance. Do 1-2 sets.

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