

Kilimanjaro

Fitness, Training & Altitude

Embarking on your expedition is an exciting journey of discovery and adventure. It involves unlocking the beauty of the great outdoors, finding resilience, and creating unforgettable memories. It's a journey where every uphill climb leads to a rewarding summit, and challenges become opportunities to grow. So, lace up your boots, breathe in the fresh mountain air, and step into a world where each path is a step towards self-discovery and the wonders of nature. If you are a complete beginner wondering if you can do it? The answer is 'Yes!' - just follow the steps below...

We have classified Kilimanjaro as a **level 5** expedition. For more information about our levels system <u>click here</u>. We expect participants to have a **very good level of fitness**. Although this is not a technical trek, it is very steep in places and you will be gaining and losing height quickly. Trekking Kilimanjaro requires **careful preparation** to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Here are some steps you can take to train.

Consult a Professional:

 Before starting any training program, especially if you have pre-existing health conditions, consult with a healthcare professional or a fitness expert to ensure that your training plan is suitable for your individual needs.

Cardiovascular Fitness:

- Kilimanjaro is a high-altitude trek, so **cardiovascular fitness is crucial**. Engage in aerobic exercises such as running, cycling, swimming, and brisk walking to improve your endurance.
- Include uphill and downhill training to simulate the varied terrain you'll encounter on the trail.

Strength Training:

- **Strengthen** your legs, core, and upper body. Focus on exercises such as squats, lunges, step-ups, and core exercises to build overall strength.
- Incorporate exercises that **mimic the demands of trekking**, such as carrying a backpack.



Hiking and Trekking:

- As much as possible, incorporate **hiking and trekking** into your training routine. This will help your body get used to the motion and endurance required during the climb.
- Gradually increase the intensity and duration of your hikes, focusing on building stamina.
- We would recommend hiking at least twice per month in preparation for this expedition. In the three months prior to departure, try to include two long training hikes (6-8 hours at a comfortable, steady pace) on consecutive days with a 8kg rucksack.

Pack Training:

- Get used to carrying a backpack similar to what you'll use on the trek. Start with a lighter load and **gradually increase** the weight.
- Practice walking with a loaded backpack on different terrains to simulate the conditions for Kilimanjaro.

Flexibility and Balance:

• Work on flexibility and balance through activities such as yoga or Pilates. This can help with navigating uneven terrain and **reduce the risk of injuries**.

Mental Preparation:

• Kilimanjaro will be mentally challenging. Practice mindfulness and **mental resilience**. Consider spending time in nature, where you can experience changing weather conditions and varied landscapes.

Gear Familiarisation:

• Get used to the gear you'll be using on Kilimanjaro, including your boots, clothing, and backpack. Make sure everything fits well, is worn in, and is comfortable.

Earth's Edge Training Weekend:

Before every expedition, we organise a training weekend where you'll have the chance to meet
your fellow adventurers! Led by experienced guides, these weekends include a
comprehensive expedition briefing, two training hikes, and invaluable advice covering
everything from equipment to weather conditions. Not only are these events educational, but



they're also enjoyable, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. Your training weekend dates are shared with you in your 'Welcome' email. Food and accommodation for the weekends are not included.

Remember that climbing Kilimanjaro is not a technical route, but it does require good physical conditioning, mental resilience, and the ability to acclimate to high altitudes. It's important to listen to your body and make adjustments to your training as needed.



Altitude:

Climbing Kilimanjaro involves reaching **high altitudes** (up to 5,895m), where the reduced oxygen levels can sometimes cause **Acute Mountain Sickness** (**AMS**). Symptoms include breathlessness, headaches, poor sleep, nausea, and dizziness. Fortunately, the human body is remarkably capable of adapting to these high altitude conditions. This process - called acclimatisation - takes time.

While there is plenty of oxygen even at the highest point of this expedition, the key to avoiding AMS is **to gain height slowly**. Supporting your body by staying hydrated, eating well and protecting your airways helps it adjust naturally, setting you up for a safe and enjoyable trekking experience.

Pacing:

• Take your time and keep your walking pace **slow and steady.** This will help regulate your heart rate and energy levels. Those who **set and maintain the correct pace** on the initial days tend to be strongest at higher elevations.

Hydration and Nutrition:

- Staying well-hydrated is a huge factor in acclimatising. Aim to drink at least three litres of water per day, with **five litres being ideal**.
- Eat well and snack regularly to maintain high energy levels throughout the day. This is not the time to diet your body needs plenty of fuel for the trek.

Protecting Your Airway:

At high altitudes, particularly in dry conditions, it's essential to protect your airway by
covering your mouth and nose with a bandana or buff. This is especially important in hot
weather or when breathing heavily. Practising this technique before the expedition will
help you adjust to the sensation.



Diamox:

• We recommend that all participants, especially those with a history of AMS, take Diamox prophylactically (as a preventative measure) during the expedition, starting on the first day of trekking. It is advisable to try Diamox for two days prior to departing Ireland to ensure you don't experience any of the more serious side effects. Always consult and follow the advice of your own doctor regarding Diamox or any other medication.

AMS Response:

If symptoms of AMS do occur, our **expedition doctor** is at hand to help **assess** the situation and provide **treatment**. In more severe cases, the best course of action is to avoid gaining further altitude, or descending to a lower elevation, which often brings rapid relief.

Our itinerary has been carefully designed to **minimise the risk of AMS**, and our experienced team is always on hand to provide guidance and support.