

Appendix 3

Multi-day walking training

Even if you are used to running or walking half and full marathons, it is a completely different thing to walk a half marathon day after day in all weathers, with a laden backpack on your back.

I've heard people say, 'I work standing all day so walking should be a breeze'. Don't be fooled! Without putting in some regular training you might be one of the statistics that doesn't make it to Santiago because of blisters, shin splints or tendonitis.

- Start on a course of supplements and a calcium rich diet weeks before you go. This will help to build up your bones so that overuse doesn't result in stress fractures.
- Buy a skipping rope and have fun skipping like the boxers do. Any weight bearing, impact exercise will stimulate osteoblasts to lay down strong bones.
- Start training shorter distances then build up to a similar distance that you plan to walk on the Camino.
- Your feet might feel fine after walking for 10 km or even 15 km but it could be that they start to swell after 20 km and it is only then that you will know if they were the right size and fit.
- Learn how to prevent blisters and hot to stop spots from becoming blisters.
- Walk back-to-back days – perhaps over a long weekend – so that you know what your feet feel like after walking three long distance days in a row. This should reveal any problems you might encounter with shoes/boots, clothing and backpack.
- Try carrying your water in bottles or a hydration bladder and decide which sizes will be best for you on the Camino.

Here is a 16-week, long distance training programme from the 'Do it for Charity Website'.

Programme notes

The 16-week programme is a rough training guide. Obviously with work, family and fundraising commitments you may not always be able to achieve what we have set out for you. However, in order to get close to achieving the training it is very important to organise your time properly.

There are plenty of ways to ensure that you maximise your training, even if you feel you have no time outside work. You must organise your week to make time to get out to do some training.

- Get up an hour earlier and go out for a quick walk with some stretching in the morning before work, while it is still light.
- If you can walk to work, do so. If you get to work by public transport, get off a stop or two earlier than usual, so that you walk some distance each day. If you drive, park further away than usual, or walk a longer route to work.
- Use your lunchtimes to take regular brisk walks around your work area, not just a stroll around the shops.
Find a steep set of stairs, i.e., five floors of a department store/office block and climb them five times, at least three times per week.
- Swimming, squash, badminton, cycling and any other sport will also help get you prepared.
- Joining a leisure centre is a good idea as the local fitness instructors may well be able to design a programme specifically for you. Most good gyms have a walking machine, or even better a stair climber, where you can clock up mileage more safely and comfortably, but do try to walk as much as possible in 'real' conditions and wearing your rucksack and boots.
- It is important at weekends to get into some hilly areas to experience walking on different surfaces, get used to the hills and of course the weather. You should wear the boots and rucksack you will take on the trek.
- You should make the time to walk some consecutive long days: an isolated Sunday walk does not have the same effect as two consecutive days.
- Nothing will prepare you for the trek better than actually walking. Even if you're only doing an hour around the park or streets put your rucksack and boots on, you may look silly but it's worth it.

You may not stick to the training guide exactly but you need to keep it in mind and to do regular exercise every

week according to the guide. You will enjoy this challenge far more if you are physically fit.

Training tips

After the first six weeks you need to gain endurance by walking long slow distances. Pick one day per week as your long walk to gain endurance. Choose two evenings or mornings as your shorter walks with the Circuit Exercises to help build specific muscles groups. Remember to stretch after every walk; it is also essential to stretch after about ten minutes of walking once you've warmed up a bit. Make sure you plan adequate rest/recovery days as part of the training.

Of course nothing is better than walking. However, if you play squash, tennis, badminton or go to the gym, cycle or swim for an hour or two, then this will also help with your general fitness. Adding this to your programme instead of one of the short days or on one of the rest days would be fine. Make sure you stretch properly after each session.

Week 1–6:

2 x 30 mins walks. 1 x 2 hour walk. Full stretch after each walk.

Week 7 and 8:

Sat or Sun: 4 hour walk and stretch.
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 9:

Sat AND Sun: 4 hour walk and stretch (walk both days if possible).
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 10 and 11:

Sat or Sun: 6 hour walk and stretch.
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 12:

Sat AND Sun: 6 hour walk and stretch (walk both days if possible).
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 4, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 13 and 14:

Sat or Sun: 8 hour walk and stretch.
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 15:

Sat AND Sun: 8 hour walk and stretch (walk both days if possible).
Mon: Rest day

Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 5, stretch.
Fri: Rest day

Week 16:

Sat or Sun: 4 hour walk and stretch.
Mon: Rest day
Tues: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Weds: Rest day
Thurs: 1 hour walk, stretch, exercise circuit x 3, stretch.
Fri: Rest day