



# 55KM TRAINING AND PREPARATION GUIDE

PRIMARY PARTNER

**Deloitte.**

NATIONAL PARTNERS

*Paddy Pallin*  
SINCE 1930

TRAINING SUPPORTER

**melbourne osteopathy**  
SPORTS INJURY CENTRE

TOGETHER FOR ADVENTURE

[TRAILWALKER.OXFAM.ORG.AU](http://TRAILWALKER.OXFAM.ORG.AU)

**OXFAM**  
**TRAIL**  
**WALKER**



In this booklet, you'll find all the information you need to prepare yourself for the physical and logistical challenges of Oxfam Trailwalker.

---

## CONTENTS

YOUR SAFETY	3
TRAINING TIPS	4
BEGINNER TRAINING GUIDE	6
INTERMEDIATE TRAINING GUIDE	10
ADVANCED TRAINING GUIDE	14
YOUR HEALTH	20
NUTRITION AND HYDRATION	22
YOUR SUPPORT CREW	23

This handbook includes information on some of the very real health risks involved in Oxfam Trailwalker.

Please note that this information is for general guidance only and specific individual advice should be sought from your doctor, sports specialist and/or nutritionist as appropriate.



*"Oxfam Trailwalker was an incredible experience and we were determined to complete it together. The feeling as we all came down the hill to the Finish was quite overwhelming, and the support and information we received from the volunteers was fantastic.*

*"As a first-timer, I found the organisation to be great. The regular updates, the training information ... the enthusiasm of everyone involved was wonderful and really spurred us on.*

— Alex Gifford, Team Miele One

All Oxfam Trailwalker participants have a responsibility to act safely at all times, taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety, as well as that of their fellow participants.

## ADEQUATE TRAINING

Much of the trail covers difficult terrain and you will be out in open country for many hours. It is important that you plan and train for the event well in advance. During training, please take precautions and exercise due diligence with regards to safety. Oxfam Australia takes no responsibility for risks associated with your training. Your team is obliged to research and plan your training walks adequately with consideration for local conditions.

## HEALTH COVER

In addition to taking special care while training, we recommend all participants have adequate personal injury insurance and ambulance cover.

## SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Numerous hazards, such as small rocks, fallen branches and tree roots, are realities of the trail. The terrain is difficult and it is easy to slip, trip and fall, so take care at all times.

## TIREDFNESS

You should ensure you take adequate rest stops. The desire to finish the event should never override the need for personal safety. To prevent exhaustion, your team's pace should be guided by the slowest team member.

## NIGHT WALKING

Walking at night requires special vigilance to reduce the risk of injury. All team members should carry a torch with extra batteries. Ensure your team includes night walking in your training.

## FIRST AID

First aiders will be stationed at each checkpoint on event weekend. However, each team is required to carry a standard first aid kit. The first aid kit should include pressure bandages to treat injuries such as sprains, blisters, cuts and snake or spider bites, and a thermal blanket for each team member. All participants are encouraged to learn the most up-to-date basic first aid techniques. We encourage you to carry a first aid kit with you when training.

## ROAD CROSSINGS

Oxfam Trailwalker endeavours to provide marshals at all major road crossings on event weekend, we ask participants to take special care and to obey pedestrian lights when they are in place.

## FLASH FLOODING

Sections of the trail may be subject to flash flooding. Should heavy rain occur on event weekend, checkpoints will be notified and you will be advised of the latest trail conditions.

Exercise extreme caution when crossing creeks as water levels can rise rapidly. You should not attempt to cross any swollen or fast-flowing waterways.

## WIND STORMS

Many tree species in national parks are prone to dropping their limbs in high winds. Please be extremely cautious during gusting or gale-force wind days, as the chance of falling limbs is very high.

The parks may close during extreme high winds as a safety precaution, so please keep this in mind when planning your training walks.

## BUSHFIRE PREVENTION

To avoid risk of bushfire, participants are required to adhere to bushfire regulations, including not smoking or lighting fires.

If bushfire affects the trail during the event, participants will be notified either at the nearest checkpoint, via mobile phone, or by trail safety crews.

When planning your training walks, always check the latest safety information and advice from the relevant state authorities before you head out.

## SNAKES AND SPIDERS

Watch your every step to avoid stepping on snakes. Snakes can be aggressive when provoked. Keep your distance if you encounter a snake and do not attempt to capture or handle it.

You should also be wary of spiders. Gear left lying around should be checked for stowaways! Make sure you know the most up-to-date first aid techniques for handling snake and spider bites, and always carry appropriate first aid supplies.

## SAFETY BRIEFING NIGHT

At least one member of your team will need to attend our Event Safety Briefing Night which takes place in the two weeks prior to Oxfam Trailwalker. We'll provide you with key event safety information. If you can't attend you'll be able to watch our Recap video online. Look out for your invitation to Briefing Night in your inbox.



Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS



Toby Cogley — experienced adventure racer, Oxfam Trailwalker Legend and a member of the fastest team at Oxfam Trailwalker Sydney 2008 — has provided these training tips. These guides are suggestions only and participants should consult their physicians or personal trainers for specific advice.

## TRAIN LOCALLY

Train as close to home as possible. If this is your first Oxfam Trailwalker, walking or running this distance for the first time is tough enough without the addition of travel stress!

## GET FAMILIAR

Train on the course whenever possible. When this is difficult, train on terrain that reflects what you will encounter during the event.

## TEST YOUR SHOES

Wear a good pair of hiking boots or running shoes. Make sure they are well 'broken in' before the event by wearing them on practice walks. Do not wear new shoes for the event. A spare pair of broken-in shoes is recommended.

## PACK WELL

In training, find out what you'll need to carry, including the type and amount of food, amount of water, etc. There is no reward for carrying more than is absolutely necessary.

## TRAINING DIARY

Keep a training log to record the distances, sections of the trail and total time you've covered. This helps you figure out what training works best and will provide time estimates for your support crew.

## THE 10% RULE

From one week to the next, do not increase your total weekly distance covered, or the distance of your long walk/run, by more than 10%. A big increase in distance or level of intensity greatly increases your chances of injury.

## CROSS TRAINING

Cross training, along with regular stretching and possibly a weight training program, will reduce your risk of injury and keep the training interesting. It's particularly important for beginners to build their strength and endurance.

## TAKE A BREAK

Stopping briefly for breaks during training will help you work out the best strategy for your team, including what to eat, how long to rest, what gear changes you'll need, etc. Use this strategy to help plan your team's transitions through the checkpoints.

## FIND A RHYTHM

Use your training to establish a rhythm for the event. If you are planning to include running in the event, a popular run/walk pattern is to run 20 minutes then walk 5 minutes. Some people prefer a jog/walk pattern where you might jog the flats and then walk the rest. Again, apply the pattern that you practised in training. Nearly all teams (including the most advanced) walk up the hills to conserve their energy.

## FIND YOUR FEET

Training for Oxfam Trailwalker is not about speed, or even distance, but rather time on your feet. The most important part of training is the long walk/run 'sandwich', where you do back-to-back walk/runs on successive days (like Saturday and Sunday).

## INTERVAL TRAINING

If time is a problem, a shorter, faster session is a great alternative. More intense interval training will improve your endurance because it boosts muscle strength and stamina.

## NAVIGATION

Always take maps and make sure you know how to use them. Also, take a torch and a spare battery pack — just in case.

## MAKE IT FUN

When you're in for the long haul, involving team-mates or friends make for more fun. They will also help you establish more credible team goals, and provide entertainment and encouragement. Arrange your training hike to finish at a beach or local restaurant, and then invite your support crew to join you for a small celebration.

## INSURANCE

You are strongly advised to take out insurance to cover injury or death, and any damage to personal property.



Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS





Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS

## WHAT LEVEL IS FOR ME?

- BEGINNER (FINISH TIME: 14-18 HOURS):**  
For participants who have not done anything like Oxfam Trailwalker before — you either don't have much previous experience in endurance events, or maybe you're coming back after an extended time off. The main aim here is to finish and have fun doing it!
- INTERMEDIATE (FINISH TIME: 10-14 HOURS):**  
For participants who do regular aerobic exercise, are pretty confident on rough terrain, or have done long trail walks before.
- ADVANCED (FINISH TIME: <10 HOURS):**  
For participants with a high-level of aerobic fitness. You may have done marathons, ultra-marathons, or Oxfam Trailwalker—you name it! Although we don't recommend running part or all of the event due to falls risk, we understand that some may run the trail and that you take caution doing so.

## TRAINING GUIDELINE: LEVEL OF TERRAIN

**EASY:**  
Flat, stable terrain. Generally paved, sealed, or good-quality, hard-packed gravel.

**MODERATE:**  
Some hills and some loose terrain. Can be on or off-road.

**ADVANCED:**  
Steep ascents and descents. Off-road, single track and loose terrain.





**BEGINNER**  
(FINISH TIME: 14-18 HOURS)

<b>PHASE 1: BUILDING A BASE</b>		The start. It may seem a little daunting to begin with, but focus on the small improvements session-to-session and week-to-week and the improvements will come in quick!		
<b>PHASE-WEEK</b>	<b>NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY</b>	<b>WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)</b>	<b>LEVEL OF TERRAIN</b>	<b>STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*</b>
<b>WEEK 1-1</b>	3 sessions Easy to moderate pace walks for 1 hour	3 hours (9km)	Easy	A
<b>WEEK 1-2</b>	3 sessions Easy to moderate pace walks for 1 hour 10 mins	3.5 hours (10.5km)	Easy	B
<b>WEEK 1-3</b>	4 sessions Easy to moderate pace walks for 1 hour 15 mins	5 hours (14km)	Easy	A
<b>WEEK 1-4</b>	4 sessions Easy to moderate pace walks for 1 hour 20 mins	5 hours 20 mins (16km)	Easy	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE

## PHASE 2: THE LONG WALKS

The first month is down, now it's time to start specific training for the long walk. This phase can be challenging, but it's also very rewarding. Slowly increase the difficulty of your sessions so that you maintain a gradual improvement and stay healthy. You can also start testing your equipment and nutrition.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 2-5</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1 hour 15 mins 1 long walk: 1 hour 45 mins	5.5 hours (16.5km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 2-6</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1 hour 15 mins 1 long walk: 2 hours	5 hours 45 mins (17km)	Easy-Moderate	B
<b>WEEK 2-7</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1 hour 15 mins 1 long walk: 2.5 hours	6 hours 15 mins (19km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 2-8</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 3 hours	7.5 hours (23km)	Easy-Moderate	B
<b>WEEK 2-9</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 4 hours	8.5 hours (26km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 2-10</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 5 hours	9.5 hours (29km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE



## PHASE 3: PEAK

You've got a good body of training behind you, now it's time to do some event simulation. This is where you will use all your equipment and nutrition to see how it stands up under event conditions. It's also a good opportunity to practice night walks, and practice with your team.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 3-11</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 2 hours 1 long walk: 8 hours	14 hours (42km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 3-12</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 2 hours 1 long walk: 12 hours	18 hours (54km)	Moderate-Difficult	B

## PHASE 4: TAPER

You've got through the hard parts of the training build up — well done! Now it's time to consolidate your training. It's important to stay active, but to do just enough so that you keep your fitness, but stay fresh for the event at the same time.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 4-13</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 4 hours	7 hours (21km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 4-14</b>	4 sessions 3 short walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2 hours	5 hours (15km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE



# INTERMEDIATE

(FINISH TIME: 10-14 HOURS)





## PHASE 1: BUILDING A BASE

You already have a decent level of fitness, it's time to start focusing and look at improving over the next 14 weeks. Runs are a great way of building fitness, but optional, and can easily be replaced with fast-paced walks. Stay consistent and focus on your short and long-term goals.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 1-1</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 30 mins each 1 moderate pace walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 1.5 hours (moderate terrain)	3.5 hours (14km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 1-2</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 45 mins each 1 moderate pace walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2 hours (moderate terrain)	4.5 hours (18km)	Easy-Moderate	B
<b>WEEK 1-3</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 2 hours 15 mins (moderate terrain)	5 hours 45 mins (23km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 1-4</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 1 hour 45 mins 1 long walk: 2.5 hours (moderate terrain)	6 hours 15 mins (25km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE

## PHASE 2: THE LONG WALKS

The build phase, here we really want to start conditioning your body to cope with the challenge ahead. Keep on track, and the results will speak for themselves. You will also start to train over more challenging terrain, this is important, as it simulates what you will be doing on the day of the event.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 2-5</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 3 hours (moderate terrain)	7 hours (28km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 2-6</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 3 hours 15 mins (moderate terrain)	7 hours 15 mins (29km)	Moderate-Difficult	B
<b>WEEK 2-7</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 3.5 hours (moderate terrain)	7.5 hours (30km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 2-8</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 4 hours (difficult terrain)	8 hours (32km)	Moderate-Difficult	B
<b>WEEK 2-9</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 5 hours (difficult terrain)	9 hours (36km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 2-10</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 6 hours (difficult terrain)	10 hours (40km)	Moderate-Difficult	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE



## PHASE 3: PEAK

Here is where all your training to date will pay off. These two weeks are a bit like a practice run – we want to put your equipment and nutrition strategies to the test so that you can iron out all the kinks before the event.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 3-11</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 8 hours (difficult terrain)	12 hours (48km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 3-12</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 2 hours 1 long walk: 10 hours (difficult terrain)	14 hours (56km)	Moderate-Difficult	B

## PHASE 4: TAPER

This is where you take the foot off the pedal, and allow your body to absorb the last 12 weeks of training you have completed. It's important not to take the foot off the pedal completely, you don't want to decondition. You'll slowly back off the load, so that you are fresh and ready to go by event day.

WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 4-13</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 8 hours (moderate terrain)	7.5 hours (30km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 4-14</b>	4 sessions 2 easy pace walks: 1 hour each 1 moderate pace walk: 1.5 hours 1 long walk: 2 hours (moderate terrain)	5.5 hours (22km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE



**ADVANCED**  
(FINISH TIME: <10 HOURS)



## PHASE 1: BUILDING A BASE

It's time to start focusing over the next 14 weeks. Fartlek (Speed play) alternates between fast and moderate paces in a walk. This helps rev your body's engine more than a steady moderate paced walk would. An example is alternating walking 1km fast and 500m moderate for your walk.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK) *
<b>WEEK 1-1</b>	5 sessions 3 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2 hours (moderate terrain)	6 hours (33km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 1-2</b>	5 sessions 3 easy pace walks: 1hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2 hours 15 mins (moderate terrain)	6 hours 15 mins (34km)	Easy-Moderate	B
<b>WEEK 1-3</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2.5 hours (moderate terrain)	7.5 hours (41km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 1-4</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 2 hours 45 mins (moderate terrain)	7 hours 45 mins (42km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE

## PHASE 2: THE LONG WALKS

In this build phase, you really want to start conditioning your body to cope with the challenge ahead. Keep on track, and the results will speak for themselves. You will also start to train over more challenging terrain. This is important, as it simulates what you'll be doing on the day of the event.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK)*
<b>WEEK 2-5</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 3 hours (moderate terrain)	8 hours (43km)	Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 2-6</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 3 hours 15 mins (moderate terrain)	8 hours 15 mins (45km)	Moderate	B
<b>WEEK 2-7</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 3.5 hours (moderate terrain)	8.5 hours (46km)	Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 2-8</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 3 hours 45 mins (difficult terrain)	8 hours 45 mins (48km)	Moderate-Difficult	B
<b>WEEK 2-9</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walk: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 4 hours (difficult terrain)	9 hours (49km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 2-10</b>	6 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 Fartlek walk: 1 hour 1 long walk: 5 hours (difficult terrain)	10 hours (55km)	Moderate-Difficult	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE



## PHASE 3: PEAK

Peaking. Here is where all your training to date will pay off. These two weeks are a bit like a practice run, you want to put your equipment and nutrition strategies to the test, so that we can iron out all the kinks before the event.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK) *
<b>WEEK 3-11</b>	5 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 6 hours / 33km (difficult terrain)	10 hours (55km)	Moderate-Difficult	A
<b>WEEK 3-12</b>	5 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 8 hours / 43Km (difficult terrain)	12 hours (65km)	Moderate-Difficult	B

## PHASE 4: TAPER

This is where you take the foot off the pedal, and allow your body to absorb the last 12 weeks of training we have completed. It's important not to take the foot off the pedal completely, you don't want to decondition. We'll slowly back off the load, so that you are fresh and ready to go by event day.

PHASE-WEEK	NO. OF SESSIONS WEEKLY	WEEKLY HOURS (GUIDE KMS)	LEVEL OF TERRAIN	STRENGTH SESSION (ONE PER/WEEK) *
<b>WEEK 4-13</b>	5 sessions 4 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 4 hours (moderate terrain)	8 hours (44km)	Easy-Moderate	A
<b>WEEK 4-14</b>	4 sessions 3 easy pace walks: 1 hour 1 long walk: 3 hours (moderate terrain)	6 hours (33km)	Easy-Moderate	B

\* REFER TO PAGES 18-19 FOR STRENGTH TRAINING GUIDE

# STRENGTH

TRAINING SESSIONS





## STRENGTH PROGRAM A

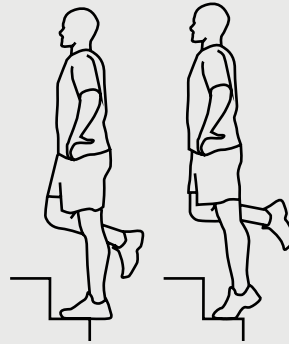
### EXERCISE

### HOW TO

#### SINGLE LEG CALF RAISES

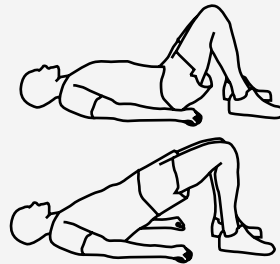
with weighted back pack  
(similar to what you'll hike with)

3 sets, 12 reps



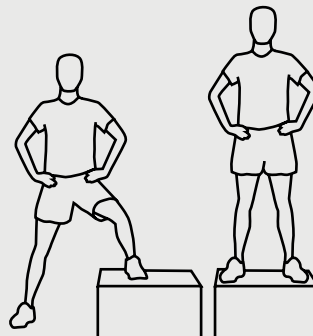
#### GLUTE BRIDGES

3 sets, 12 reps



#### SIDEWAYS STEP-UP

3 sets, 12 reps



## STRENGTH PROGRAM B

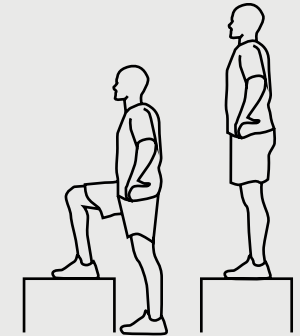
### EXERCISE

### HOW TO

#### STEP-UPS

with weighted back pack  
(similar to what you'll hike with)

3 sets, 12 reps



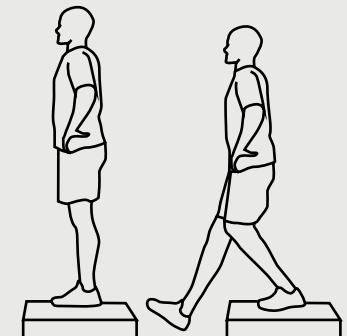
#### PLANKS

3 sets, 1 minute



#### STEP-DOWN HEEL TOUCHES

(no pack needed)



## PLEASE BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING RISKS:

### DEHYDRATION

Dehydration is the condition of having insufficient fluid in your body tissues. There is a serious risk of dehydration in a long and strenuous event like Oxfam Trailwalker. Dehydration can lead to impaired performance, vomiting and, in very extreme cases, muscle failure, potentially resulting in death.

#### Symptoms:

- Tiredness
- Irritability
- Tight/heavy-feeling muscles
- Headache
- Dry mouth and lips

*Note — symptoms are only apparent when you are already dehydrated. Symptoms are very similar to those of hyponatremia.*

#### Prevention:

- Drink electrolyte drinks instead of, or in addition to, water. Try these during training to ensure you can drink them comfortably.
- Monitor your urine and make sure you are urinating at regular intervals and that the urine is light in colour.

If you are not urinating, or your urine is dark in colour, you may be dehydrated. If you experience any of the symptoms of dehydration, consult the medical staff at the nearest checkpoint or follow emergency procedures.

### HYPONATREMIA

Hyponatremia, or water intoxication, occurs when you have consumed too much water. This results in reduced salt levels in the blood and body tissues. It is an extremely dangerous condition that can rapidly lead to a coma and may result in death.

#### Symptoms:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Lack of coordination

*Note — these symptoms are very similar to those of dehydration.*

#### Prevention:

- Drink electrolyte drinks instead of, or in addition to, water. Electrolyte drinks contain salts and thereby assist in maintaining the correct salt balance in your body. Try these during training to ensure you can drink them comfortably.
- Monitor your fluid intake. Drink just enough so you don't feel thirsty and are urinating at normal periods. If urination becomes frequent and clear-coloured, you may be drinking too much.

If you experience any of the symptoms of hyponatremia, consult the medical staff at the nearest checkpoint or follow emergency procedures.

### HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia is a condition in which your core body temperature drops below 35°C. If left untreated, hypothermia can ultimately result in heart failure and death.

#### Symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Shivering
- Muscle spasms
- Clammy skin
- Stammering
- Hallucinations

#### Prevention:

- Carry warm clothes and be prepared for dramatic temperature drops.
- Wear extra layers of clothes. Change into warmer clothes when it gets cold, especially at night.
- Carry, or have your support crew carry, a change of clothes in case you get wet.
- When you rest at checkpoints, either cover up or change out of damp, sweaty clothes to avoid catching a chill.

If you experience any symptoms of hypothermia, consult the medical staff at the nearest checkpoint or follow emergency procedures.

### HEAT EXHAUSTION

During hot weather, the body's internal temperature can rise, resulting in heat exhaustion or heatstroke. In extreme conditions, heatstroke can ultimately lead to heart failure and death.

#### Symptoms:

- Muscle weakness
- Nausea
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Irritability
- Severe headaches



Photo: Keith Parsons/OxfamAUS



*Note — as the condition worsens, symptoms include confusion, decreased responsiveness, little-to-no sweating and flushed, hot, dry skin.*

### Prevention:

- Maintain adequate fluid intake.
- In exposed sections of the trail, wear sunscreen and a hat.

If a member of your team exhibits symptoms of heat exhaustion, find a shady area, administer frequent sips of water or follow emergency procedures.

### CONDITION AT EVENT TIME

Your ability to safely complete Oxfam Trailwalker is greatly impacted by how you're feeling just before the event.

### Factors to consider:

- Are you recovering or suffering from an illness?
- Did you participate in another endurance event within two to three weeks prior to the event?
- Did you have a big night out (ie late night and/or high alcohol intake) within a week prior to the event?
- Have you been on a long-distance plane trip within 48 hours prior to the event?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions or, just prior to the event you feel less than 100% for any reason, reconsider participating in Oxfam Trailwalker and seek advice from your physician.

### DON'T LET BLISTERS STOP YOU IN YOUR TRACKS

Blisters are the number one reason people don't finish Oxfam Trailwalker.

There are many views on the treatment and prevention of blisters and a variety of ways to help prepare and strengthen your feet. Here are some suggested measures for prevention:

- **Shoes** — Make sure you have a good pair of comfortable, worn-in walking shoes, boots or runners, plus a spare pair in case the first get wet, you feel pressure or rubbing, or for different terrain. Find out what works for you by experimenting during your training. Don't wear new shoes during the event!
- **Socks** — The best advice is to wear good-quality moisture-wicking socks in a synthetic/cotton or wool blend. Some participants find that double-socking using thin liner socks under thicker walking socks works for them. Regular sock changes during the event are recommended, and also provide welcome relief for your feet.
- **Moisture control** — Keeping your feet dry will reduce the likelihood of friction blisters. Some walkers use spray-on antiperspirant on their feet before and during the event. Don't apply petroleum-based products as they are known to actually increase skin friction on long walks. Simple measures, such as changing out of wet shoes and socks, are the most effective.
- **Know your feet** — Get to know where your feet are prone to blisters. Cover these areas with blister patches or tape before the event.
- **Recognise hot-spots** — The key to blister prevention is to recognise hot-spots, which are slightly sore or warm patches of skin that can be caused by rubbing or pressure. Anyone who has experienced bad blisters will need no convincing that prevention is better than cure, so if you notice a hot-spot, stop and fix it.
- **Try taping your feet** — Taping feet with a hypoallergenic adhesive bandage (not brown sports tape) may help. You should round the edges of the tape to prevent it rolling up when you put socks on. Practise different foot taping techniques during training. Massaging feet with anti-friction skin balm may also help.
- **Prepare your feet** — Clip your toenails so they are short and rounded to help prevent pressure and bruising. A small callus is healthy, however, you should

gently file back excessive calluses in the weeks prior to the event. Moisturiser can also be used daily to prevent hard skin and improve skin elasticity.

### CHAFING

Chafing is a common discomfort during Oxfam Trailwalker.

### Prevention:

- Underarms, nipples and legs are all prone to chafing. Put adhesive bandages or a hypoallergenic tape over the nipples and apply anti-friction skin balm (not petroleum jelly) to the other areas.
- Chafing between the thighs can be tackled with bike shorts or by shaving the affected areas and applying tape.
- Wear a base layer of clothing that pulls perspiration away from your body. This helps with both chafing and reducing chills from sweating. Outdoor stores have a full range of wicking clothes for just this purpose.

### MANAGING YOUR MEDICINE

Take caution when using painkillers and other medicines during training and the event. In the past, some participants have overused painkillers. This can lead to serious health complications and hospitalisation. We advise participants seek medical advice regarding the use of all medicines.

We also suggest that participants consider a planned approach to taking medicines, including painkillers. This minimises the risks created by poor decisions that can easily occur due to exhaustion or a lack of knowledge.



Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS

To cross the Oxfam Trailwalker finish line, adequate nutrition and hydration are just as important as your fitness training. You may not be able to go the distance if you don't provide your body with the fuel it needs. on a more serious note, if you don't drink enough liquids — or not the right types — you may find yourself in hospital.

## FUELLING UP

### Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are your main fuel source during high-intensity exercise, however, your body only stores limited amounts, so it's essential to replace them to avoid hitting the wall. Foods that contain carbohydrates include bread, cereals, starchy vegetables, legumes (eg lentils), fruit and their juices, dairy products, sugars, honey, soft drinks, cordial and confectionary. Scientifically-formulated sports foods (eg sports drinks and gels) will also provide carbohydrates (and electrolytes) and assist with hydration. However, if you use these products, remember to test them during training.

### Proteins

Proteins are building blocks for your muscles. People who exercise regularly require more protein than people who don't. However, most people already consume enough protein to meet this extra requirement. Foods that contain protein include meat (red, white and fish), dairy, eggs, nuts and legumes (eg lentils).

### Fats

Your body only needs a small amount of dietary fat, which provides fat-soluble vitamins and assists with other bodily functions.

Your body will use fat as fuel during the event, but you don't need to increase your fat intake during training or the event as your body probably already has enough fat available. Having said that, healthy fats are an essential part of a healthy diet, which is particularly important while

you train. Foods that contains healthy fats include dairy, avocado, eggs, extra virgin olive oil, nuts, seeds, and oily fish such as salmon.

## WHAT TO EAT BEFORE THE EVENT

As your body can only store a limited amount of carbohydrates, you can increase your store directly before the event by carb loading. For three to four days before the event, increase your carbohydrate intake. During this time, eat less high-fat food because it makes you feel full and you won't be able to eat the carbohydrates.

On the morning of the event, eat a high-carb breakfast one to four hours before the event to top up your carbohydrates one last time. Alternatively, if you have an early start, eat a bigger dinner the night before and a smaller, carbohydrate-rich snack in the morning. Or you can simply be mindful of eating carbohydrates early and consistently during the event to ensure your levels are topped up. This will help you avoid hitting the wall.

## WHAT TO EAT DURING THE EVENT

What you eat during the event is a personal decision and should be trialed throughout your training. Seasoned participants will have their own proven eating plan. For those new to endurance events, the following are a few basic tips to get you started:

- Eat meals and snacks that are high in carbohydrates.
- Eating every three hours should keep you on track.
- Meals can include sandwiches, wraps, rolls, noodle soups, rice and pasta.
- Snacks can include fruit, pikelets, muesli bars, pretzels and bread with jam.
- Plan when you'll eat. It's often hard to replenish carbohydrates once you've hit the wall.

## HYDRATION

Maintaining the right level of hydration is essential for events like Oxfam Trailwalker. In extreme cases, over-hydration can result in a severe medical condition called hyponatremia. On the other hand, failing to hydrate sufficiently can lead to significant health consequences like dehydration (see 'Your Health' section and check out our Hydration Guide [here](#)).

Ensure you maintain a steady intake of fluids throughout the event, consisting of both water and electrolytes. Monitor your urine and ensure you are urinating at regular intervals and that the urine is light yellow to clear. If urination becomes very frequent and clear in colour, you may be drinking too much. On the other hand, if you are not urinating or urine is dark in colour, you may be dehydrated. It is beneficial to consult a health professional for a personal hydration strategy.

## RECOVERY

Drinking water and eating carbohydrates and protein is important for recovery. Around 15-30 minutes after the event, have a snack that includes some carbohydrates and protein as this will help you recover effectively. During this time, your muscles can easily absorb carbohydrates and protein. Also, make sure you drink plenty of fluids (including sports drinks) 24-48 hours after the event. Avoid drinking alcohol after the event as it has a negative impact on the recovery of nutrition and soft-tissue injury caused by exercise.

*Text by Emilie Isles, Accredited Sports Dietician and Oxfam Trailwalker past participant. For more information, consult a local sports dietician via Sports Dieticians Australia at [www.sportsdietitians.com.au](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au)*







Photo: Patrick Moran/OxfamAUS

Behind every great team is an even greater support crew. Support crews are the unsung heroes of the event and they will provide your team with unconditional love, dedicated support and endless motivation throughout your Oxfam Trailwalker journey.

A comprehensive Support Crew Guide is available for download from the support crew page of the website. This guide provides information on what is involved in being part of a support crew, including tips, gear lists and some important advice on driving and fatigue. Please ensure your support crew is aware of this downloadable resource.

## THINGS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER:

### Choosing your crew

You will need at least two people in your support crew – one to drive and one to navigate - with a maximum of 10 support crew members. Ideally, you will have more than one crew working in shifts over the weekend. One vehicle pass will be issued for each checkpoint that has support crew access. Strictly only one vehicle per team is allowed at these checkpoints. Support crew passes will be sent to Team Leaders in their Event Pack.

### Involving your crew

Your support crew is an extension of your team, so involve them in your training, fundraising efforts and team meetings. Ideally, your support crew will include people who understand the nature of the event, or have even participated themselves.

Encourage your support crew members to join your training walks so they can get to know your team and see first-hand the enormous challenge you are undertaking.

### Acknowledging your crew

A strong support crew will make your Oxfam Trailwalker experience more comfortable and enjoyable, so it's important you acknowledge them in the lead up to, during, and after the event. Let them know how important they are and celebrate your success with them!





# OXFAM TRAILWALKER

 1300 369 606

 [trailwalker@oxfam.org.au](mailto:trailwalker@oxfam.org.au)

 [m.me/OxfamTrailwalkerAustralia](https://m.me/OxfamTrailwalkerAustralia)

ABN: 18 055 208 636

[TRAILWALKER.OXFAM.ORG.AU](https://TRAILWALKER.OXFAM.ORG.AU)



**OXFAM**  
Australia