

Physically Fit

By now we expect you have created a Watchu Family e-mail network to share Watchu Grams and other messages with all crew members and their families.

Trekking at Philmont can be physically and mentally very tough. Everyone must be fit if a crew is to have a great experience. One "out of shape" crew member can ruin it for all. Or as noted in the Scout Oath, everyone must be "physically strong and mentally awake".

A few tough hikes will not do it!!!

Advisors need to know it is **not** possible for a crew to be fit and ready just by taking a few tough hikes in New Jersey, New York, and/or Pennsylvania. Every member of the crew must map out their personal training program and get to work on it now. Your training will depend on your age and your current physical condition. Adults are going to require more work, but the scouts will need to do considerable training also. No one escapes the need to "Be Prepared" physically and mentally.

First, everyone must be at fighting weight. Endurance and aerobic training is essential. Increasing lung capacity is a must. Get your blood pressure in shape with exercise, and medication if necessary. Check in with your doctor now for help. And most important, you must know how to keep yourself hydrated.

The "Watchu 55" Training Plan: Time and Pack Weight

Walking can make all of this happen. Beginning now, we recommend you power walk three miles a day in 55 minutes or less, four or five times a week. In January add a 25 pound pack to your back. Gradually increase the pack weight to 55 pounds (or 1/3 of your body weight if you weigh less than 165 pounds) by the first of June. You should not carry anything near 55 pounds on the trail, but it is helpful to train at that level - extra weight in New Jersey partially compensates for altitude at Philmont. Adding weight is easy. Pack you pack with your personal gear then simply add plastic soda or milk bottles filled with water in your pack to simulate more and more crew gear.

Since this is a good plan for keeping healthy in general, it is a good idea for all. 55 minutes a day can be worked into most of our schedules, for instance with your spouse in the evening after work, rain or shine. Walk to nearby shops rather than jumping in the car, or park at the far end of the parking lot. At work or the mall, take the stairs rather than the elevator. Start now drinking extra water to stay hydrated.

Working on the Watchu 55 training plan, eating properly, and being hydrated will help guarantee an outstanding experience. And when your neighbors see you out hiking with your pack, we know from experience that you will be the talk of the town.

Hydration: How do you know if you are hydrated? As the Rangers at Philmont will tell you, keep your urine "Clear and Copious." That is, drink water until your urine is clear. And "copious" means "lots." In New Mexico's very low relative humidity, 6 to 8 liters of water a day should do it, about one liter spread out over an hour while involved in physical activity. Start now to observe your hydration and give your body the water it needs. It is important to share these ideas with your crew now, and in coming Watchu Grams we will have more to say about hydration.

Important: In the summer of 2014, the latest data available, 8 participants were not allowed on the trail because they did not meet the [height/weight](#) and [blood pressure](#) requirements; in the recent past the numbers were higher; for example 37 participants (28 Advisors and 9 youth) in 2009. These participants were sent home on Day Two at their own expense. Get your physical exam as soon as possible - the [BSA Annual Health and Medical Record](#) is available online. Know your weight and blood pressure status. Work with your doctor on a plan to meet all Philmont requirements. You can do it!

Are you and your crew Clear and Copious?

Gene Hayward

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