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## Physical Conditioning

The type of climb, course, or expedition you are booking will determine the level of conditioning needed. Give us a call if you have questions. It would be best if you were in good to very good to excellent physical condition, as all our climbs and courses occur at altitude and in the mountain environment. Therefore, it is essential to train and do physical conditioning before your course or climb. An exercise and training program is required for advanced-level courses or altitudes above 14,000 ft. The idea behind any conditioning program is to do some aerobic activity at least 4-6 times a week. Sitting at a desk or behind the steering wheel does not add to your physical health or overall conditioning. We found the best-conditioned clients do a lot of walking & hiking with and without a pack. Walk or Hike whenever possible. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Ride a bike or walk to work or the store.

**Warning:** Before embarking on any exercise or conditioning program, consult your physician.

**Aerobic:** Walking 30 minutes each day is an excellent way to condition all ages. It is easy, accessible, and relaxing. Walking, hiking, or jogging with a pack of 20-35 lbs. is an even better way to condition for climbing. To approximate carrying a pack, it is a good idea to work with lightweight (20-35 lbs) in your pack at least once or twice a week while training. According to researchers, running steadily for 20-30 minutes each day, keeping the heart rate up, is far more beneficial than running for speed. The same holds for all aerobic activities, whether swimming, jogging, or bicycling. The idea is to train your heart and lungs to increase your ability to use oxygen efficiently. You should prepare at least four times a week for intermediate courses and 4 to 6 times a week for strenuous classes, with at least 45-60 minutes of exercise each session. It is good to include some hill work, walking, running, or bicycling. Also good is soft sand, walking or running with a pack up hills, stadium steps, or stairs. A Versa-climber or Stairmaster is also an excellent alternative to bad weather days and, yes, with a pack.

**Flexibility:** This is an essential factor in any outdoor activity. Stretching exercises are fundamental and should be added to any conditioning program. A few minutes each day of bending and gently stretching will add to your overall conditioning.  
Training Levels

**Level I - GOOD Conditioning:** Ice Ax Clinics, Day Tours, Rock Clinics; Plan to exercise at least three times a week for 20-30 minutes each session. Plus, plan to hike or walk with your day pack a few weekends before the trip, including walking on hilly terrain once a week.

**Level II- VERY GOOD Conditioning:** Basic Winter Mountaineering, Shasta Climbs/ Mt. Whitney Summer Ascents, Sierra Nevada Summer Mountaineering, Tech Ice & Rock; Plan to train at least 4-6 times a week for at least 40-50 plus minutes each session in one of the following categories or a mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair or elliptical machines. It is also a good idea to include some flexibility training three times a week (stretching for at least 10 minutes) in your workout. Plan on having hikes or walks on hilly terrain with your pack weekly for overall conditioning.

**Level III - EXCELLENT Conditioning:** Winter/Spring Shasta Climbs/ Mt. Whitney Winter Ascents, Sierra Nevada Mountaineering, Ski/ Snowboarding; Training at least 4-6 times per week for at least 40-60 plus minutes each session in one of the following categories or a mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair or ski machines. Include some flexibility training three times a week (stretching for at least 10 minutes) in your workout. Plan on including at least 2-hour weekend training hikes and climbs with your loaded pack for overall conditioning. Running or walking stairs or stadium bleachers is excellent training for climbing and mountaineering.

**Level IV- EXCELLENT EXPEDITION Conditioning:** Expedition Training; Level IV training required six times per week for at least four days at 40-60 minutes each session, two days at 60 -120 minutes each session, in one of the following categories or mixture of each: running, bicycling, swimming, stair master, or other aerobic activities. It is also a good idea to include some flexibility training three times a week (stretching for at least 15 minutes) in your workout. Plan on having 4-hour weekend training hikes and climbs with your loaded pack for overall conditioning (can count as a 60-120 minute session). Other activities which will improve your conditioning for the expedition include; weight training for strength, versa-climber, jogging with a light day-pack, and running stairs or hills. V22.0