

Pic Aneto

Pyrenees Highest Peak

Europe | 3,404m



360 
EXPEDITIONS

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Aneto (3,404m), is the highest **mountain** in the **Pyrenees**. Its flanks retain the largest glacier of this spectacular mountain range. 360's packed 5-day trip with an ascent to the lofty summit introduces the **trekker** to the best of Pyrenean adventure.

The view from the top is staggering. Getting there is perfectly achievable by any fit trekker. Which is not to say it's a doddle to be taken lightly. Summit day is long but rewarding. As you cross passes that have been used for 1000s of years, the mountain will throw multiple challenges your way on varied terrain ranging from steep grassy flanks to sharp rocky ridges, gigantic boulder fields, glass smooth granite slabs and steep bulletproof ice – all requiring careful navigation. We don't like going back the way we've come if we can avoid it, so you'll descend via a completely

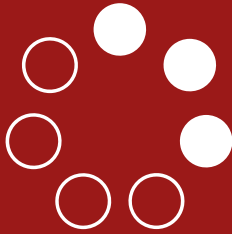
different route, dropping down into a pristine alpine valley, passing braided streams, waterfalls and curious marmots.

Even for seasoned mountaineers Aneto never gives up its treasure easily. A more varied and satisfying short adventure is hard to imagine. All 360 trips to Aneto are led by professional guides who know the mountain well. All equipment is provided and the skills needed to climb the mountain are taught before the summit attempt.

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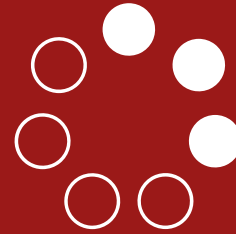
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Physical – P3

This trip is physically tough. Frequent exercise is necessary to prepare properly for this expedition. Regular walking mixed with training at the gym to build up endurance and cardiovascular fitness is key. Expect to be able to do 8 hour days in hilly and often steep terrain, carrying a pack of 6-10kg in weight with the occasional extra long day.



Technical – T3

May involve harder scrambling or some trekking and climbing with ropes. If snow is encountered then glacier travel with ropes, ice axes and crampons will be necessary. Basic climbing skills are ideal, but these will also be taught (and certainly practiced) during the expedition and pre-summit phase.

Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.



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ITINERARY

DAY 1 : Fly from UK

Arrive Luchon and settle into guesthouse/hotel. Course briefing covering essential information for the following days, talks on food, personal equipment and group equipment. Shopping for food and gear. Local trek to get accustomed to your gear and to stretch the legs after the travelling. Weather forecasting and general first aid information.

(D)

DAY 2 : Sauvegarde (2,738m)

Transfer to the Hospice de France from where we ascend the spectacular Port de Venasque. The path zig-zags steeply up this heavily vegetated glacial valley to a mountain refuge (food and drinks available) and several spectacular hanging mountain lakes. Situated just above us at this point is the narrow notch called the Port de Venasque. This narrow opening through the high rugged ridge is an international border crossing between France and Spain.

We are rewarded for our efforts by jaw-dropping views of the entire Maladeta Massif and Pico Aneto itself. We take a short detour at this point to climb to the summit of Sauvegarde (2,738m,) which lies to our west (1 hr). From here we can see the heavily forested French valleys and the glaciated Spanish summits and on a clear day get a great view of many of the Pyrenean giants. Accommodation in the Renclusa refuge.

(BLD)

DAY 3 : Ascent of Pico Aneto (3,404m)

Today will be an early start with breakfast at about 6am. We then climb up the initial vegetated slopes of the sharp ridge that divides the Maladeta range from the summit of Aneto.

After 2 hours we reach the ridge and follow its rocky back for a while until we reach a feature known as the keyhole from where it is possible to look across the glacier and see the summit for the first time. A short descent puts us into a vast boulder field and an intense boulder hopping session begins.

After an hour we reach the ice and begin a lesson in crampon technique and basic glacier travel. Then we rope up and begin the traverse across the steep ice to the summit that looms closer with each step. Eventually we reach the steep rocky northern flank of the mountain and climb up to the low summit of Aneto. This broad summit is 10 meters lower than the true summit but separating the two lays the famous Puente de Mohammed, a short, but extremely impressive and exposed knife edge ridge with immense drops on either side. We rope up and cross this challenging feature. After a nerve racking moment or two we stand on top of Pico Aneto.

The ascent complete, we are rewarded with unbeatable views and a fantastic sense of achievement. We descend via a different route once we have re-crossed the Puente de Mohammed into the stunning Benasque Valley. From here we walk back to the Renclusa Refuge.

(BLD)

DAY 4 : Hospice de France

Today we climb back up to the ridge before descending back to the Hospice de France via the stunning Col d'Escalette giving you a chance to see more of this amazing mountain range that divides France and Spain.

Accommodation at a local Luchon guest house or hotel.

(BL)

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ITINERARY

DAY 5 : Day of leisure in Luchon and fly back to UK

Depending on your flight time you can enjoy a day of leisure in Luchon, either relaxing or taking in one of the many outdoor activities that the beautiful mountain town has to offer.

Transfer back to Toulouse Airport.

(B)

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KIT LIST

Bags & Packs

Daysack

Approx. 40-60L capacity. Your day to day pack that you carry with your daily essentials, fitted with shoulder straps and importantly a waist belt

Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

Drybags

Nylon rolltop bags (or even just large plastic bags) that keep fresh clothing and other important items like passports and iPods dry in the event of a total downpour that seeps into your rucksack. Good for quarantining old socks

Sleeping Gear

Sleeping bag liner

Optional. Bedding is provided at the hotels / guest houses and blankets are supplied in the refuges, but some people prefer to bring a sleeping bag liner for extra warmth / comfort. Silk is best for keeping you a little warmer.

Headwear

Warm headgear

This can be a warm hat, beanie, balaclava, anything to reduce the heat loss from your head

Wide brimmed hat

Keeps the sun off exposed areas like ears and the nape of the neck

Buff/Scarf

Essential for protection from the sun and dust

Sunglasses

Worth spending money on good UV filters. For glacier work category 4 with side and nose protectors. Julbo is our preferred supplier

Sunblock

Buy the highest SPF you can find as UV intensifies with altitude

Lip salve

Sun cream will not work on your lips and they are very susceptible to burn without proper protection

Goggles

Low light lenses recommended as goggles most likely used in poor weather

Upper Body

Base layer

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to draw (wick) moisture and sweat away from the skin. You can also get thermal base layers for use at higher altitudes that provide an additional insulative layer while still drawing sweat during times of high exertion

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KIT LIST

Mid layer

These are typically lightweight microfleece or similar technology that provide varying degrees of warmth and insulation without being overly bulky or heavy to pack

Soft Shell

These should be windproof (not all are) and insulative. They are mostly made of soft polyester and sometimes resemble a neoprene finish which makes them very mobile and comfortable to wear. While offering a degree of weather repellence, they are not waterproof

Waterproof jacket (Outer layer)

A good Goretex Hardshell jacket provides effective defence against wind and rain as your outermost layer

T-shirts / Trekking tops x 2

A couple of t-shirts or loose fitting (non-cotton) trekking tops / shirts to wear whilst walking

Warm gloves

Consider liners or a light polartec pair for lower altitudes and evenings, and a thicker waterproof pair like ski gloves for higher altitudes

Feet

3-4 season walking boots

Well worn in 3-4 season waterproof boots with mid to high ankle support and a fairly stiff sole which will support an adjustable crampon.

Trekking socks

Start with lighter socks lower down, working up to thicker pairs for higher up as it gets colder. Some people like a clean pair every day, others are happy to change every other day – that's a personal choice

Gaiters

To protect the tops of your footwear from harsh conditions and to provide some added insulation

Lower Body

Waterproof overtrousers

Like the jacket, an essential piece of kit to stay dry and should also be Goretex

Trekking trousers

These tend to be polyester so they dry quickly after a shower and weigh little in your pack. Consider perhaps a pair with detachable lower legs as an alternative to shorts

Underwear

Merino or wicking material, not cotton. How many pairs you take is entirely up to you

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KIT LIST

Technical Equipment

Climbing harness (available to borrow from 360)

It's always good to have your own climbing harness and we recommend Petzl. Don't worry if you don't have your own - 360 can lend you one at no cost.

Climbing helmet

A plastic helmet is more suitable rather than the expanded foam helmets available. Make sure you can wear it with a woolly/fleece hat underneath.

Ice axe (available to borrow from 360)

A walking ice axe between 55cm and 65cm. If you have got this already, then this is good as it always helps to practice with your own. If not 360 will lend you an ice axe

Crampons (available to borrow from 360)

10/12 point crampons with anti-balling plates (not ice climbing crampons). If you have got these already, then this is good as it always helps to practice with your own. If not 360 will lend you crampons

Trekking poles with snow baskets

Hydration

Water bottles / bladder

2L capacity either in a combination of bladder and Nalgene bottle or just Nalgene bottles

Water purification

Although generally all water is boiled some prefer to double up and add purification tabs as well. Always good to have in your bag

Toiletries

Wash kit

Keep it simple on the mountain. Essentials are toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. Moisturiser is advisable, everything else is a luxury!

Travel towel

Travel towels from the likes of Lifesystems are perfect

Wet wipes

Preferably biodegradable, these are great for washing when modern shower facilities become a thing of the past

Alcohol gel

A must have for good camp hygiene

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KIT LIST

Medications

Personal first aid kit

The 360 med kits are designed to be used in emergencies and akin to an A&E rather than a pharmacy on Expeditions so please come prepared with useful meds for yourself such as painkillers (Ibuprofen if you can take it and a Paracetamol) plus blister plasters, plasters, antiseptic, rehydration sachets and any muscle rubs you wish to use.

Personal medication

Keep this in your daysack

Miscellaneous

Ear plugs

For protection against the inevitable snorers!

Head torch

We recommend Petzl head torches. Bring spare batteries.

Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards

Penknife (optional)

Snacks

You will be fed very well and given snacks each day however we advise bringing a small selection as a little bit of comfort. For summit night it's always good to have a few extra chunky bars for that extra boost. Energy gels and protein bars are not suitable

Documentation

Travel insurance

Copy of own travel insurance details. And relevant contact numbers. We have a partnership with True Traveller and would recommend that you contact them when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. However, it is vital that you ensure that the insurance cover they offer is suitable for you, taking your personal circumstances (items to be insured, cancellation cover, medical history) into account. Many other insurance providers are available and we do recommend that you shop around to get the best cover for you on the expedition you are undertaking. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip. To include medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Dental check up

Worth having this done BEFORE you go out to prevent problems occurring some distance from a French or Spanish dentist

Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity. With your passport expiry date at least six months after the final day of travel.

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KIT LIST

EH1C (formerly E111)

While you do have travel insurance, this can save you paperwork and reduce upfront costs should you have a minor ailment or need to see a local GP if you already have one

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FAQ'S

The Climb

Is there a quicker way to climb this peak than the one outlined on your itinerary

Yes there is. We call it the fast and furious. This involves a very long day of both driving and climbing. We leave Luchon around 3 am to arrive at the National park gate at 6 am. Then we walk 40 minutes up to the refuge and from there commence the ascent of Aneto peak. We usually summit after a 5 – 6 hr climb and (conditions depending) descend in 3 – 4 hrs. Then its back into the car for a 3 hr drive back across the border to France to our guest house or hotel in Luchon. Total time on the go is around 16 to 17 hrs. For the super keen only!

How tough is the trek?

Just because we're in Europe and reasonably close to home, it doesn't mean that you're undertaking a gentle walk in the hills! This is a fairly challenging trek with significant altitude gain and some long days, learning techniques that may be new to you, like use of crampons.

Food and Water

Where do we get drinking water from?

All drinking water is from the refuge or can be bought at various stops for the first day's walking. We pass streams in various places that you can top up from if you should run out, so take purification to add to it in the form of silver chloride or chlorine.

What is the food like in the refuge?

The food in the refuges is plentiful and of very good quality, often using locally sourced ingredients. Breakfasts consist of pastries, fresh bread and jams and you can expect a three course meal in the evenings.

**Do you provide snacks during this expedition?
Or do you recommend that we bring our own?**

360 provides some snacks for your days on the mountain, however do bring some of your favourite snacks from home, a range of fast and slow release energy snacks. The pure 'energy' style bars which are solid are quite tough to eat on the mountain so go with simple things. Flapjacks, shortbread, sweets, nuts and chocolate are great, snacks that you're going to really look forward to eating and which will give you energy.

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FAQ'S

Accommodation

What are the guesthouse and refuge like?

We use a local Luchon guesthouse or hotel for the accommodation before and after the trek. Twin or double rooms are available (chat to us for single supplements) and breakfast is included. The Refuge is dormitory style accommodation, but each person will have their own bunk bed.

Can you get a hot shower there?

Yes, hot showers are available. There may be a small supplement for hot water.

Health and Safety

What happens if there is an issue on the trek with a client – a fall or an illness?

360 Expeditions have conducted detailed risk assessments and put the necessary plans in place to cope with any accidents or illness whilst out on the trek. Our expedition leaders are highly qualified and experienced mountain leaders who hold expedition first aid qualifications and are used to working in remote environments. Their training allows them to deal with situations quickly and safely.

Should someone find themselves requiring further medical attention, the leader will organise for that individual to be taken from the trail and transferred to the nearest hospital. The leader and the 360 office team will also be on hand to offer guidance and support for insurance claims and contacting next-of-kin.

Is there any risk of altitude sickness?

There is minimal risk of altitude sickness on this trek.

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FAQ'S

Kit

Do we need crampons and ice-axes?

These are necessary for the climb above 3,000m. To reach the summit you have to climb the ever steepening Aneto Glacier. The ice and snow conditions vary according to the time of the year but crampons and ice-axes are mandatory for each ascent. For crampons non-technical strap-on types will do. If you are using crampons with the more modern heel clip make sure you have boots that are compatible. We recommend the Grivel 10 point walking crampons. A general walking ice-axe is ideal. These can be sourced locally, please let us know in advance and we can arrange it.

Do I need a sleeping bag?

All refuges provide blankets but for your comfort and for hygiene reasons we'd recommend bringing a sleeping bag liner (silk or cotton), or a very lightweight sleeping bag. Remember whatever you bring you will be carrying it!

How much weight will I be carrying in my rucksack?

If you are borrowing or buying a rucksack, ask someone to help you adjust it to fit your back. And ensure you are making these adjustments with weight inside it, not empty. Generally it should sit reasonably high on your back so that the weight is acting vertically downwards, not forcing your shoulders back or drooping past your backside. Again, it's about how you feel comfortable wearing it and important to get right.

Make sure too that it is either waterproof or you have a waterproof cover for your rucksack. It is also advisable to pack your kit in plastic bags/bin liners or waterproof bags before placing them in your rucksack. You should bring a rucksack with you of approximately 40-60L for personal gear, clothing that you need close to hand if the weather changes like additional layers and waterproofs, and sustenance. It's importance to go as light as possible as weight makes a huge difference at altitude and steep ascents. You will be carrying your daysack so think twice before putting too many hipflasks in!

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FAQ'S

What clothing do we need?

Think about how much of the kit you are likely to use again and what sort of expeditions you are likely to do in the future. The cost of equipment is usually a major deterrent for people coming onto trips in the first place. If you think you'll reuse your gear, then it's worth starting to invest in good gear. The old adage often applies – you get what you pay for. Think about the time of year, and how high you are going. While you may swelter at the bottom of the mountains, it can get surprisingly nippy at altitude.

Both long sleeve tops and trekking trousers are recommended rather than shorts. Long sleeves and trousers are recommended as a deterrent to insects, scratches from bushes and to act as sun protection. Equally, if you wish to bring short sleeve tops or shorts, that's fine, just be careful. Keep an eye on sunburn. The prevailing conditions of the day on the mountain will dictate what you feel like wearing. And the layering system never fails. If you're cold, put a layer on, if you're hot, take one off.

If this is a taster into the world of climbing and trekking, borrow kit from friends, alternatively you can hire it from our partners at Outdoorhire.co.uk at a fraction of the cost of buying kit new.

What boots do we need?

Because of the huge variety of terrain encountered when ascending these mountains it is very important to wear the right footwear. Boots should be sturdy, waterproof, insulated against cold temperatures and offer adequate ankle support. In addition it is highly recommended that your boots are well worn in to prevent the formation of blisters. You will need crampon-compatible boots for Aneto also.

A wide range of suitable boots are on the market and further advice as to which brand names are available can be found online or at your local outdoor store. The leather / Goretex combinations are endless and each with their merits. Our best advice is to try them on – if you think they're comfortable, and will be for several hours a day, buy them.

Do I need a down jacket?

A down jacket is not essential, a good thick fleece or jumper will suffice for the evenings.

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FAQ'S

The Weather

What is the weather like?

During the day temperatures can be warm and can even reach to the mid 20 C. In the evening higher up, it could drop to below freezing and have a chill in the air.

For early spring or late autumn ascents there can be snow from the refuge and the temperatures on the summit well below freezing.

As you will be trekking in a mountain environment, the weather can rapidly change for the worse so you need to be prepared for all conditions. Even in good weather it is not uncommon to have short heavy downpours or heavy snowstorms.

Travel

Flights aren't included what time should I arrive and depart to Toulouse?

We haven't included flights as this gives you options from the UK. There are many flights that come to Toulouse daily from many different airports.

It's important that we check flight schedules before confirming a pickup time with you, as we want to make sure you can actually make it to Toulouse on time. We will confirm what time you should aim to arrive in Toulouse as we draw closer to your departure date.

We will also check flight schedules before deciding what time we do an airport drop off.

Once you know the above, please find flights that work for these timings, or plan to have the night before and/or night after in Toulouse.

If there are any issues with booking your flights, please let us know and we will try and help however it might mean getting a hire car/train or taxi to your start / finish point.

Bagneres de Luchon is 1h 40 mins drive away.

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FAQ'S

Flights aren't included, what time should I arrive and depart to Toulouse?

We will advise you on the group's flight schedules so that you can all book the same or if not similar flights for your trip in plenty of time.

We then plan your airport transfer timing around this.

What happens if I miss the pickup time?

We suggest that you get an early a flight as possible from the UK to Toulouse so if your flight is delayed this gives you options in being able to get to the starting point of your expedition.

At the point of sign up, 360 will have given you a pickup and drop of time. If you are wildly out of the time slot due to flight delays, 360 will always do what they can to arrange an alternative with you and have on occasions personally done the pick up. Thereafter the options will be to hire a car or jump on a train.

Insurance

Do I need special travel insurance for the expedition?

You must carry individual travel insurance to take part in the expedition. We cannot take you on the mountain without proof of insurance.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate insurance for your intended trip to include, at a minimum, medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip.

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however this can be arranged at a later date, though we would always suggest having cancellation insurance in place at the time of booking. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure if we have not received them prior to this. We in the office use [True Traveller](#), and further links to insurance companies past trekkers have used can be found [here](#).

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FAQ'S

Training

What training do we need to do?

Being trekking fit before coming to the mountain is of great importance not only to maximise your chances of reaching the summit but much more importantly to enhance your overall enjoyment of the expedition: if you are struggling from day one then you will not enjoy the rest of the trip.

Physical preparation does not have to be Herculean: concentrate on cardio vascular exercise during the week by taking short runs when time allows and try to spend at least 2 weekends a month going on good long walks (longer than 6 hrs) carrying a rucksack of around 10kg, and head for the hills.

This kind of regime will not only prepare your body for carrying minor loads but will harden your body against the big days on the mountain itself. In addition it will help break in your boots and get used to your equipment. This will pay dividends when you reach the mountains.

Several excellent training plans can also be found online to prepare you for this ascent. Check the thorough advice offered by [UpHill Athlete](#).

Electronics

Is there mobile reception?

Mobiles will work fine once you get to 3,000m but not at the refuge.

Will I be able to get WIFI along the way?

The refuge doesn't have WiFi due to its remoteness, but you will be able to access WiFi at the guest house in Luchon.

Can I charge my camera / iPod in the mountains?

The refuge does have electricity so you will be able to plug things in to charge, but depending how busy the refuge is, you might find yourself competing for a socket with other guests.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

To begin 6 months prior to the expedition where possible.

1. CVS: Cardiovascular exercise which is low impact such as swimming, cycling, cross trainer, rowing.

2. Weekend walk should be done over undulating terrain. Only a light rucksack needs to be carried.

3. For specific exercises it is worth doing static squats and heel raises on a regular basis to improve leg muscles prior to the trip. Static squats are especially useful to help protect the knees. Please remember that it is still important to have a well balanced workout using a variety of muscle groups.

4. It is worth winding down and resting in the week leading up to the trip, doing several light walks to keep things going.

5. When walking going at a pace of a brisk walk with a light sweat and enough to feel breathless is recommended

6. During the program, rather than step up suddenly each month (example, going for 3 one hour walks each week during the weekdays in April to 3 one and half hour walks suddenly in May) it is better to build up gradually each week so there isn't a large transition (example, going for 3 one hour walks during week 1 in April, going for 3 one hour and ten minute walks during week 2 in April, going for 3 one hour and fifteen minute walks during week 3 in April, going for 3 one hour and twenty minute walks during week 4 in April)

6. It is important you seek medical advice prior to starting any training program, especially if you are not used to regular physical exertion

All the best with your training!

MONTH 1

OPT 1

2 x 30 mins weekday walk
1 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 30 mins weekday walk
2 x 1 hour weekend walk
1 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 2

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 3

OPT 1

2 x 45 mins weekday walk
1 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

OPT 2

1 x 45 mins weekday walk
2 x 2 hours weekend walk
2 x 10 mins CVS

MONTH 4

OPT 1

3 x 1 hour weekday walk
1 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1 hour weekday walk
2 x 4 hours weekend walk
3 x 15 mins CVS

MONTH 5

OPT 1

3 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
1 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 1.5 hours weekday walk
2 x 5 hours weekend walk
3 x 20 - 25 mins CVS

MONTH 6

OPT 1

3 x 2 hours weekday walk
1 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS

OPT 2

2 x 3 hours weekday walk
2 x 6 hours weekend walk
3 x 30 mins CVS



"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty & well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out & loudly proclaiming 'Wow! What a Ride!' "

Dream it. Plan it. Live it.