

# Ordesa & Gavarnie Trek

## Highlights of the Pyrenees

Europe | 1,242m



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Stretching 400 kms from the Atlantic Coast to the Mediterranean, the dramatic mountain range of the Pyrenees forms the 'frontiere sauvage' between France and Spain. For many trekkers, the jewels of these mountains are the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of **Cirque de Gavarnie** and the **Ordesa Mont-Perdu National Parks**, and it is here that this truly exceptional week-long expedition takes place.

Given National Park status in 1918, the Ordesa area is dominated by **Monte Perdido**, or the "Lost Mountain", the third highest peak in the Pyrenees at 3,355m. Made up of three very distinct and recognizable summits called the Three Sisters, from this massive mountain a number of vast, plunging canyons emanate, several thousand metres deep.

Ancient paths connect the tiny villages dotted around these canyons, and along our trek we'll be rewarded with views of the canyon floor rich in beech and fir forest, past enormous glacier fed waterfalls to sharp limestone ridges, and to the plateau above where stretches of high altitude desert round up a hugely varied set of landscapes that cannot help but stir your soul.

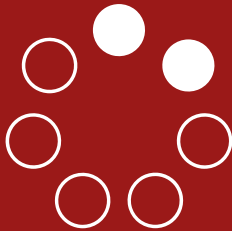
This unique itinerary has been hand-picked by our 360 guides and their extensive local knowledge assures you experience the most sensational scenery and adventure in this dramatically beautiful area, unlike so much else you'll find in Europe.



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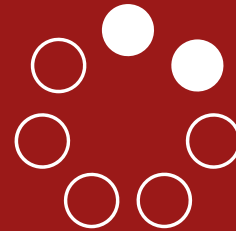
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### Physical – P2

This trip is challenging and a good solid fitness level is required. There will be prolonged walking over varied terrain and you should be training to comfortably walk for 6 to 8 hours, over undulating terrain, with a few punchy uphill climbs, carrying a pack up to 6kg in weight.



### Technical – T2

Consider this a trek, although there may be occasion to use hands for short sections of easy scrambling. No previous climbing or trekking experience is necessary.

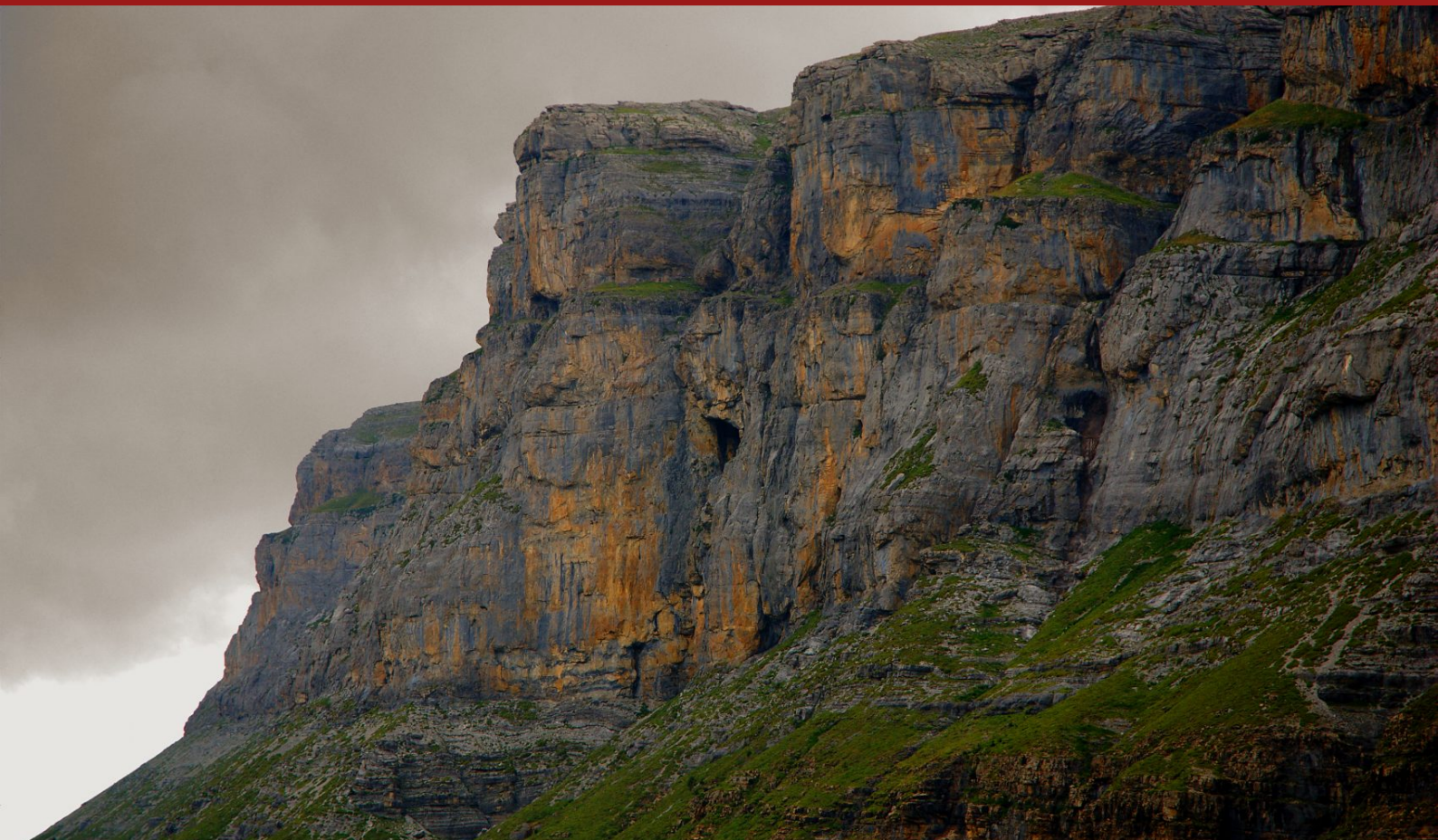
Please note that the grading system used is a rough guide only.





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### ITINERARY

#### DAY 1 : Arrival & transfer to Nerin, Spain

You will be met at Toulouse airport by your 360 guide for the week. Once all together, we will transfer by minibus to the Spanish village of Nerin, situated on the southern tip of the Pyrenees. The journey takes about 4 hours, and we stay at a local Basque inn in the village and have a hearty traditional supper there.

(D)

#### DAY 2 : Pico Mondoto, Ordesa Canyon to Goritz Refuge

Keeping away from the crowded footpaths entering the bottom of the canyon, we begin our adventure with a winding climb through the beech forest towards Pico Mondoto (2,000m). Once above the tree line we veer north over the high plateau towards Cuello Arena (1,930m) and Cuello Gordo (2,188m) which serve as the gateway to the spectacular Ordesa Canyon. Reaching the head of Canyon we are awarded for our day's walk with outstanding views of the Rolando Gap, the awesome bulk of Monte Taillón, the Casco and Monte Perdido. From here, the landscape changes dramatically as we traverse a great lunar-like plain that stretches up the mountain to the Goritz Refuge situated at 2,200m, our cosy base for the night.

Total trek time: 6-7 hours

(BLD)

#### DAY 3 : Ordesa Canyon and Cirque de Gavarnie

Today is a day of exploration of this stunning area. We set out from the refuge and take an incredible path that runs along a system of ledges perched perilously high above the canyon. Differential erosion over eons has carved ledges which, in the past, sheep and cow herders, hunters and, more recently trekkers used as convenient pathways to link spectacular routes up and down the canyons. The most spectacular is the Faja Las Flores, which serves as one of the most exciting routes in the entire park, traversing spectacularly above the rim of the Ordesa gorge, offering jaw-dropping vistas of the canyon's kilometre high walls and its floor impossibly deep below us and beyond across the high Pyrenees. From here we climb steadily up the upper lip of the Cirque de Gavarnie, a massive natural Amphitheatre which plunging waterfalls cascading off its kilometer-high walls. After likely taking hundreds of unbelievably spectacular images, we return to the Goritz Refuge for a well-earned supper!

Total trek time: 6-7 hours

(BLD)

#### DAY 4 : Anisclo Canyon - Bestue (1,242m)

After breakfast we set out south east over the ridge above the Goritz Refuge, down into the geologist's paradise of the narrow and mysterious Anisclo Canyon. We follow the far side of this steep-sided gorge for some time, before finally branching off and following the path over the plateau that leads us eventually to our night stop in the tiny hilltop village of Bestue.

(BLD)

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### ITINERARY

#### DAY 5 : Bestue - Lamiana

From Bestue, we head for the impressive gorge of Gargantas d'Escuain. We'll spend some time exploring this beautiful spot, before climbing up to the razor-sharp crests on the way to Lamiana, arriving at our accommodation in time for dinner.

(BL)

#### DAY 6 : Lamiana - Luchon

From Lamiana we head south east along the ridge. On the way we pass the famous Tella Dolmen, an ancient megalithic tomb consisting of a massive slab of rock sitting on uprights. From Tella we climb up to the high pass and spectacular vistas of the Portillo de Tella (2,062m) that mark the entrance to the Bielsa Valley. We drop down to the valley floor, passing the glacial waters of the lake to meet our minibus that awaits in the valley village of Bielsa. If we have time, we'll grab a quick refreshing beer, then we will be taken to the French mountain town of Luchon where we'll check into our centrally located hotel, have time for a shower before a well-earned dinner.

(BL)

#### DAY 7 : Return to UK

We'll transfer to Toulouse Blagnac Airport in time for the return flight to the UK.

(B)

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### KIT LIST

#### Bags & Packs

##### Daysack

Bring a 40–60L rucksack that is well worn in and with a good waist belt. A waterproof cover is advisable (remember that these covers are not 100% waterproof but act as a barrier). Whilst on the mountain you will need to carry all of the kit that you are not wearing.

##### Drybags

Rolltop bags that keep fresh clothing and other important items like your passports and electronics dry in the event of a total downpour that could seep into your kitbag. Good for quarantining old socks! Please note that France has banned plastic bags. In any case, we would always advise buying reusable and sustainable nylon rolltop bags for keeping your kit dry.

##### Waterproof rucksack cover

To protect rucksack from rain

#### Sleeping Gear

##### 2 Season sleeping bag

You should get a sleeping bag rated to 5°C and choose a sleeping bag that functions within the comfort rating of this temperature. A silk sleeping bag liner will enhance this rating on the coldest nights. We'd recommend you bring the lightest bag you can get – remember you'll be carrying it!

##### Sleeping bag liner

A liner will help keep your sleeping bag clean and provide extra warmth. 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

##### Sunglasses

Category 4, wrap around style sunglasses are highly recommended. These sunglasses allow for the highest available protection against harmful UV light found at altitude and from glare from snow and sand surfaces. It's worth spending money on good UV filters. Julbo is our preferred supplier.

##### Lip salve

Sun cream does not work on your lips, and they will be susceptible to sun burn without proper protection.

##### Sunblock

We'd recommend you buy the highest SPF you can find, as UV intensifies with altitude.



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### KIT LIST

#### Upper Body

##### Base layer x 2

This is the layer closest to the skin and its principal function is to wick, or draw, 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.

##### 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

##### T-shirts

A couple of T-shirts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days are reasonably warm, with high temperatures at lower altitudes.

##### Hard Shell

These jackets are thin, highly waterproof and windproof and worn over all other items of clothing. You'll find these made of Gore-Tex or other proprietary waterproof yet breathable technology. Inexpensive hard shells that aren't breathable will prevent evaporation, making you sweat intensely and, as such, are not recommended.

#### 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, do note they are usually not waterproof.

#### Gloves

#### Lower Body

##### Shorts

A couple of pairs of shorts are advisable for this summer expedition. The days can be reasonably warm, with high temperatures at lower altitudes.

##### 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!

##### Waterproof trousers

A lightweight pair of Goretex trousers will act as a great windproof too.



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### KIT LIST

#### Feet

##### Walking boots

Well worn in 4 season waterproof boots with mid to high ankle support

##### Spare laces

Just in case

##### Comfortable trainers/Crocs

For use in the evenings. With most refuges, you will need to take your boots off when you go in. Some provide croc/slippers but not all.

##### Trekking socks x 3

Whether you wear a single layer, or 2 pairs, is a personal choice. Lighter weight merino wool is a good option.

##### Evening clothes

Comfortable clothes for the evening

#### Hydration

##### Water bottles / bladder

You'll need enough to carry 2 litres, either in a combination of bladder and Nalgene bottles, or just Nalgene bottles.

##### Water purification

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

#### Toiletries

##### Wash kit

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

##### Alcohol gel

A must have for good camp hygiene.

##### Toilet paper

Provided at the accommodation, and at public toilet facilities, but a spare in your daysack may be useful if you need to hide behind a rock during the day.

##### Expedition towel

Towels from the likes of Lifesystems are perfect

#### Medications

##### Personal first aid kit

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

##### Personal medication

Make sure you keep this handy in your daysack if necessary.



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### KIT LIST

#### Miscellaneous

##### Camera

Bring plenty of spare batteries and memory cards. A power pack is handy for keeping things charged in the case of no charging points in the refuges (we recommend PowerTraveller).

##### Head torch

Bring spare batteries or a spare head torch

##### Snacks

Although you will be fed well, we do advise bringing a small selection of energy bars or your favourite snacks. Have a couple per day.

##### Ear plugs

Optional, of course, but for protection against the inevitable snorers!

##### Penknife (optional)

##### Swimsuit

For the wild swimming, and for any other opportunities throughout the trip if you wish!

##### Trekking poles

Optional, but they can be useful on the trekking day. These tend to be a personal preference, but can help with your stability and can dampen the pressure on the knees coming down hill.

#### Documentation

##### Passport

Don't forget this! Your passport should have at least 6 months validity: ie. your passport expiry date needs to be at least six months after the final day of travel. Make sure you also have at least two blank pages.

##### Copy of passport

Just in case

##### Dental check up

We recommend you have a dental check-up before your trip. New fillings can be an issue at altitude if there is an air pocket left in the gap



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### KIT LIST

#### Travel insurance

Bring a copy of your 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 at a minimum medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude and for the relevant activities included on this trip.

#### EH1C (formerly E111)

While you must 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. Do be aware the details on of the EH1C will be changing due to the UK leaving the EU, so check for the current availability.



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### FAQ'S

#### Food and Water

##### Where do we get drinking water from?

Bottled or filtered drinking water will be provided during the trip. We'd advise bringing your own bottle, to reduce plastic waste where possible. During the trekking day we also pass streams in various places that you can top up from if you should run out, so take purification tablets with you, should you wish to fill up.

##### What is the food like in the refuges and hotels?

The food is plentiful and of very good quality, often using locally sourced ingredients. Breakfasts consist of pastries, fresh bread and jams and you can expect hearty meals in the evenings. Packed lunches will be simple, but filling.

##### Do you provide snacks during this expedition?

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.

#### Accommodation

##### What is the accommodation like?

You'll be staying in simple but comfortable accommodation in the hotels.

The refuges are more basic, these are inaccessible mountain huts – albeit large. They all have running water, so flush toilets are standard. Most will have hot showers, but on a busy day that hot water will be in high demand and may run out. Accommodation here is in dormitories, so earplugs are recommended if snorers keep you awake!

Food along the way will be good with ample carbohydrate content – think pasta, rice, potatoes etc, but don't expect a la carte, food often has to be flown in by helicopter! Given we are all carrying our own kit we don't want to be weighed down by tents and cooking equipment, and as the refuges have beds and washing facilities they are considered the sensible and more comfortable option on these routes.

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### FAQ'S

#### Kit

##### What bag do I need?

A rucksack of around 40-60L should do you just fine – it's better to have a bigger bag with space, than a smaller one with everything crammed in!

Aim not to carry more than you need. Your day sack should contain only the essential items you will need for the day and activities and your aim should be to keep it as light as possible. We'd recommend you carry at least: a warm layer, waterproof jacket, your packed lunch and snacks, spending money, water, camera, sun cream and personal medication.

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's not a bad idea to pack your gear into waterproof stuffs sacs, in case of a deluge.

##### Do we need any technical gear for this?

No, this adventure is a trek, so standard walking gear outlined in the kit list should suffice.

#### Do I need a sleeping bag?

Yes – though bedding is provided in the hotels, you will need one for the refuges. You should get a 2-3 season sleeping bag (see the kitlist for more info). We'd recommend you bring the lightest bag you can get – remember you'll be carrying it!

#### The Activities

##### How fit do I need to be?

Although we're not at altitude, or in somewhere like the Himalayas, don't underestimate this trek. The days are relatively long with reasonable altitude gains (and losses) each day. If you make an effort with fitness before coming out you'll enjoy it far more than if you are struggling up every hill each day barely able to notice the spectacular views.

##### Can we swim in the lakes?

That's the idea! They'll be cold, but wild swimming is exhilarating. It's optional, of course, but it's great fun!



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### FAQ'S

#### The Weather

##### What's the weather like up there?

It's likely to be lovely and sunny, and reasonably warm (pretty hot lower down). However, we're in the mountains, and not very far from the Atlantic, so there is every risk of rain, thunderstorms, and wind. Night time temperatures can be chilly.

The climate of the Pyrenees is generally better than the UK, but there is still the risk of inclement weather, so we advise in the kit list to pack accordingly. And, just like any other holiday, having a quick last minute look at the forecast before you come out can be a useful pointer of what's in store.

#### 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 arrive in Toulouse daily from many different airports – chat to the 360 office team for more information.

We will be at the airport at **11.30 am** on day one of the itinerary. On the day you leave, we will be dropping the team off at Toulouse airport for **2.30 pm**. (These times are approximate and are TBC.). Please, therefore, find flights that work for these timings.

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

Bagnères de Luchon is 1h 40 mins drive from Toulouse Airport.

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### FAQ'S

#### Insurance

##### Do I need special insurance for this trip?

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

Your insurance details are requested on the booking form, however, this can be arranged at a later date. 360 Expeditions will be requesting your insurance details 8 weeks before your departure.

We have a partnership with [True Traveller](#) and recommend them as an option when looking for travel insurance for your trip with 360. Many other insurance providers are of course 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, at a minimum, medical evacuation and coverage up to the maximum altitude of this trip and for the adventure activities included.

#### Electronics

##### Will my mobile work?

In the cities, yes, out in the countryside, likely on and off! Most UK providers will provide coverage as part of your plan in France and Spain, but do check before you travel.

##### Will there be somewhere to charge my phone and camera?

There will be plug sockets in the rooms in your hotel, and some in the refuges, though availability of these isn't guaranteed. We advise bringing a powerpack (we recommend [PowerTraveller](#)) to ensure your phones / cameras / other electronics are charged throughout!



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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



# 360<sup>°</sup> EXPEDITIONS



*"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.**