



Training for Pikes Peak.

These suggestions are just a starting point for your training, and are not meant to be a substitute for a personal trainer or good book, or online resource for physical training. Consider the fore-mentioned resources as your primary methods for building a robust training platform. That said; please also feel free to reach out to your guide with any questions regarding your training. 719-368-9524 info@pikespeakalpineschool.com

To win success from the Mountain, a team needs a little bit of luck from the weather, a touch of mental 'try-hard', and a proper state of fitness. So, how best to prepare the body for the climb? Below you'll find some basic suggestions on how to get ready for your ascent of Pikes Peak.

Hiking. This is by far the best, sport-specific way to prepare the body for an ascent of Pikes Peak. Get out a few days per week with a loaded backpack. Gradually build up from just 1 hour of sustained hiking to as many as 8 hours of total effort. Walking on dirt or rocky trails, preferably uphill, is the best way to emulate the challenges that await you on the slopes of the Peak.

Notes:

Pacing: 1 hour of effort followed by ~5 minutes of rest, rehydration, and refueling. Rinse and repeat. If your pace requires that you stop for frequent breaks, you're moving too fast. A steady, purposeful saunter is what we're aiming for.

Carrying a Load: It's best to start your training by having your pack loaded with just a liter or two of water, some snacks, and weather-protecting layers. As your fitness builds over time, consider gradually adding a few extra lbs to the pack in the form of water jugs (old milk jugs work great). For hikes that reach high points, to be followed by sustained downhill sections, we like to dump all the excess water out to minimize the wear and impact on our joints - while still hanging onto our drinking water! While training for the Barr Trail, we recommend not exceeding more than 40-45 lbs of total pack weight. Carrying more weight increases the risk of injury and vastly exceeds the actual pack-weight on the mountain.

Training on irregular dirt trails is preferable to the planer surface of sidewalks and asphalt, as it engages more of the core and stabilizing muscles throughout the body. Have fun with your hiking. Go with a friend and pick a trail you haven't explored yet. Use it as an opportunity to visit a new park or trail system.

When starting out, focus on time-under-tension, not distance covered.

Jogging and Cycling: Continuous cardiovascular training at a light-to-moderate effort is another great way to diversify our training and to prepare our minds and bodies to the sustained rhythm of hiking up mountains.

Weight Training and Calisthenics: The other side of mountain fitness asks that you gain robust fitness in your core, back, and legs. Squats, deadlifts, lunges, and box step-ups all translate very well to the types of movements you'll be calling upon out on the mountain. Additionally, doing plenty of sit-ups, planks, and leg lifts will go a long ways towards strengthening your core. Having a strong core is crucial, as it links up the kinetic chain in the body, transferring energy efficiently to help us carry ourselves and our gear upslope. It also provides safety, by keeping us in-balance as we traverse the rugged, uneven, boulder-strewn surfaces of the mountain setting.

Diet and Hydration: Be sure to consume enough calories to repair your body from the rigors of training, both during and after exercise. Preparing the body for Barr is not a good time to go on a calorie restricted diet. Just focus on eating nutritious, unprocessed foods. Also, maintaining an awareness about drinking enough water will go a long ways towards helping you heal and perform well under the training load.

When you're a week or two out from your trek, it's crucial to dial back the volume of your training by as much as half, or more. This is a process athletes refer to as 'tapering'. Doing so insures that your body is acclimated to the challenges ahead, but more importantly, that it is fully rested. What you want to avoid is showing up to the mountain too beat up and exhausted from training to complete the trek. The mountain is big, the trail long, and you'll need to be fully recovered to have success.