

TRAINING TIPS FOR A DOG SLEDDING CHALLENGE



INTRODUCTION

Our Lapland Husky Trail challenge should not be underestimated, as you will be doing a lot more than just letting your Huskies pull you across the Arctic!

Before starting any training programme you should consult your Doctor/Health Clinic for further advice.

You do need a reasonable level of fitness to get the most out of our Challenges. Remember, you will be sledding over 250km, in very cold temperatures. **The fitter you are the more you will enjoy this adventure!** This is not like a trekking or cycling challenge, where you will normally have to follow a regime in order to obtain the necessary level of fitness. Below you find some notes that will help you get the most out of this adventure.

TRAINING

Whilst much of our activity on this challenge will be 'learning by doing', you will still need some level of upper and lower body strength – for example, helping steer the sled with your arms and assisting your Husky Team in pushing the sled up the mountains and hills – the dogs cannot pull you uphill alone! It would be worth working on your upper and lower body strength between now and the challenge. Good levels of stamina, good cardio-vascular fitness and sound upper and lower body strength are the three key areas for you to focus on.

Cardiovascular fitness - this is an exercise or activity that incorporates using your heart and lungs in order to improve fitness. Activities such as walking, running, cycling and swimming are great examples. A great cardiovascular exercise, especially for dog sledding is to use a cross-trainer machine – this will also help with your upper and lower body strength which we mention below. It is very useful to go to the gym as the cross-trainer can inform you of your distances and time etc. Try by starting with a small distance (1km) and then try to increase the distance by 0.5 km each time. This is also great for building stamina as you are slowly

building up to longer distances, and slowly increasing your fitness.

The same principle of slowly increasing your distance, bit by bit, every time you train, can be used when you go walking, cycling, running or swimming.

Upper body strength - it is very useful to have sound upper body strength. Free weights and press-ups should assist with this part of training. Again, for stamina reasons, try to increase the amount and weight slowly over time. We suggest working out in a gym to improve your strength in your upper body and the staff at your gym will help design a program for you, based on your current levels of fitness.

Stamina - is the capability of sustaining prolonged exercise on the body. There will be times when you will need to keep on your feet even though all you want to do is sit down! As described above, the best way for you to improve stamina is to SLOWLY increase your exercise time/weights/ distance each time you exercise.

CAMPING

Most participants find this part of the event most challenging – it is cold at night, very cold. With temperatures sometimes reaching -30°C, it is important that you are mentally prepared for this. Remember to bring everything with you on the kit list. We do strongly recommend you camp in the UK during our winter months...this will give you a good idea of what to expect, and you can create your own little 'comforts' prior to taking part in the event. A few suggestions to making winter camping more comfortable are:-

- Socks – wear your socks a little loose round the end of the toe (in essence, pull them off ever so slightly) – this will create a little 'warm pocket' around your toes keeping them warmer than just wearing them close to your skin
- Hats – wear your woolly hat whilst sleeping!



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- Water bottle – ensure you bring a water bottle that can contain warm water – “Nalgene” bottles are ideal – fill them up with warm water and pop them in your sleeping bag for extra warmth. Sleeping with your water bottle will also prevent it from freezing and ensure you have something to drink when you wake up in the morning
- Cook your food in the porch of your tent in order to warm up the inside

A FEW MORE TIPS

With your work, fundraising and family commitments, you may not be able to dedicate a lot of time into your training, but it's vital to your safety and enjoyment that you do train. However, in order to successfully train for the Challenge you will need to organise your time properly. There are plenty of ways to maximise your training, even if you feel you have no spare time:

- Get up an hour early to go for a brisk walk before work, or walk to work if you can.
- If you do drive to work, park your car further away than normal.
- Use your lunchtimes to take a walk
- Always use stairs instead of lifts / escalators.
- Try and get your family involved – take days out that involve exercise.

It's always a good idea to join a gym or leisure centre in order to strengthen your lower and upper body - you will have access to fitness instructors who will design a programme specifically for you.

You will enjoy your Challenge far more if you are physically fit!

