

Fitness and Training

WildernessCourses

Congratulations on your decision to join an AMS wilderness course! Most students find our courses to be physically and mentally challenging experiences, but not beyond the ability of the average athletic person.

The better physical condition you are in before your course, the more you will be able to come away with from your course. Proper physical conditioning is important for your safety and the safety of others. It will add to your enjoyment and your ability to be a positive contributing member of the group.

Am I in shape now? Everyone has different definitions of what being "in shape" is. A good idea is to go out for a hike carrying a backpack. Weigh the pack down using water containers that add up to 50 pounds, or 35% of your body weight, whichever is less. Hike 2-3 miles on a trail with hills. At your high point, empty the water containers to lighten your pack and decrease the strain on your knees on the descent. This will give you an idea of where your current fitness level is. Remember to always take adequate time to warm up and cool down to reduce the chances of injury.

If you haven't done so already, start your physical conditioning program now. Begin by selecting an activity you enjoy doing, as you are more likely to continue with the program. While strength is important for lifting a pack, it is more important to build up your aerobic fitness level and stamina. Cycling, speed walking, aerobics, stair climbing, jogging, rowing machine, skiing, hiking, and martial arts are all good forms of exercise. Practically any exercise that uses large muscle groups and gets you sweating with your heart rate up increases stamina. Begin gradually and build up to where an hour of your work out is at 80% of your maximum pulse rate. Build up to aerobic exercise at an intensity level where it is difficult to hold a conversation. Schedule a time during the day for exercise and aim for 4-5 sessions per week at 30 to 45 minutes each. We recommend talking to a professional exercise physiologist who can help set up a conditioning program that is good for you.

You do not need to be a real athlete to excel on a wilderness course, but you do need to be within the limits of the average active person. A desire to learn and a positive attitude are equally important to success.

We look forward to seeing you! Feel free to contact us with any questions.