



14th – 15th SEPTEMBER 2013



50KM AND 100KM WALKERS NUTRITION & TRAINING GUIDE THAMES PATH CHALLENGE 2013

A COMPLETE GUIDE ON HOW TO TRAIN AND BALANCE YOUR NUTRITION IN PREPARATION FOR THE EVENT

Welcome to The Thames Path Challenge training guide. Whether you intend to tackle the 100KM or 50KM in September 2013, you should embark on a suitable training regime well in advance. For some, this may mean starting more or less from scratch, and for others it may be re-focusing existing exercise programmes to be fully prepared on start day.

This guide is designed to support you with your training plans, whatever your level of fitness and whatever your 'time' ambition is for the event. Remember- it's 'Your Challenge-Your Way'!

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Why Train?

The Thames Path Challenge is a tough endurance event and training is essential no matter your current fitness or target time. Preparation is key and will aid your enjoyment of the challenge whilst ensuring that your body is up to the rigours of the event.

It is very important for all competitors to train properly and build up endurance and resilience thresholds, alongside your base fitness. This will enable you to cope with the distance, and provide the ability to recover between stages during the challenge.

If you're well trained, you should successfully complete the challenge at your own pace, enjoying yourself every bit of the way!

What Are You Training For?

The Thames Path Challenge is long walk at both 50km and 100km, so the best way for you to prepare is to get miles in your legs on the appropriate terrain.

- The aim is to develop your strength, stamina and cardiovascular fitness so that you and your body are prepared for the challenge.
- Equally important perhaps, is increasing your resilience to the aches and pains experienced with any endurance event and developing the mental fortitude to cope with the distance and time associated with these distances.

Your legs will be performing the same action continuously for a prolonged amount of time, so part of your training is to enable your legs to develop a natural motion, whilst increasing the ability of your legs to work efficiently for a longer period of time. It also has the added benefit of toughening up your feet and getting used to your trail shoes or boots.

Well worn in and appropriate footwear is vital to this event - a full footwear and sock advice page is incorporated in the Clothing & Equipment Check List available in the participants area of the website.



How Do You Train?

Training is a very simple concept; it is all about progressively increasing your ability to do just that little bit more, and giving your body time to adapt, recover and to come back stronger. If you are relatively new to endurance events, the trick is to build it up gradually and peak a couple of weeks prior to the event itself, allowing a recovery period beforehand.

You should be looking to plan a structured training programme, ideally around 12–15 weeks in length.

- Your training should concentrate on building a base of walking, then increasing your mileage in a structured manner.
- Build some back-to-back long days to enable you to assess any problems that may occur from walking the long distances.
- Take regular but short breaks on these long training walks.

A variety of sporting activities increase the heart rate and improve cardio vascular fitness, whilst varying your training, so try and incorporate these into your week. This can be combined to good effect with your long walk on weekends or free days.

- Look for nature trails, head for hills and forests, if there are any within your reach.
- Use the weekends to do full day hikes and if possible night-time hikes (for 100 km walkers).

*(**Medical Advice** - If you have any concerns about embarking on a serious training programme, or indeed the actual walk, please consult your GP).*



Training Tips

Don't Over Commit to training. Don't overstretch yourself, you want to reach the event day in peak physical fitness but without being burnt out.

Wear Your Gear In! Walk as often as you can and as much as you can. Wear the shoes/boots you will be wearing on the event (if they are new, then this is very important!) and find a way to carry your backpack comfortably – this will help to avoid blisters and any foot and back injuries.

Team Training. You signed up as a team, why not train as a team? Sit down together, plan your training and pencil in some longer weekend walks or runs in preparation. You will find that it's far easier to motivate yourself when your team mates are in the same boat! Support each other in the lead up and on the challenge

Night Walk for 100 KM. Try to fit in some night time walks; early dawn or evening. The more prepared you are the better you will feel at 3am on the challenge!

Step by Step - Stretch by Stretch . Break the exercise in slowly. Over training can lead to injury and could disrupt your training programme. Start with manageable training distances and speeds and then work up from there. Try to aim to fit in a longer walk at the weekends and don't forget to stretch before and after exercise.

Individuals Training Tips

If you have like minded friends then why not get them into training with you? You never know, they might enjoy it so much that they want to sign up with you!

If you are training on your own, make sure you train during the day and take a mobile phone with you and the appropriate all weather gear. You don't want to be caught out.

See if a friend can come and meet you at pre-designated stops during your long training walk.





Team Training Tips

When possible, try to take on your long training walks as a team. Get used to encouraging each other, what pace is right for your group, and understand how you will all interact over a long period. Don't worry if you feel that you are 'off the pace' - The Thames Path Challenge is not a race - it's far more about completing the challenge.

If your team intends to set a fast pace, your training should include components of jogging to up your fitness and stamina.

Try and make your training fun. Vary where you go for your long walks. If you are short on ideas look at a walking websites such as www.ldwa.org to figure out some ideas in your local area or further afield.

Top Team Tip - Keep a team training diary, this will help you see how quickly you are achieving new distances, it will record your times and give you new goals to aim for. Get into the habit of filling it in immediately after your training walks so that you can properly chart your progress and keep yourself motivated.

Thames Path Challenge Group

Please join our online Facebook group and find other challengers in your area to train with. This group has been created especially for this event and is an online forum for participants to share training stories, advice and share clothing and equipment tips. Any event updates and reminders will also be posted here. To find the Facebook group please search:

'Thames Path Challenge Group' or find the group via 'Liking' Action Challenge.

You can also follow Action Challenge on twitter, where we will have regular event updates.



Diet and Hydration

It is so important in any endurance event to keep eating and drinking to maintain energy levels; and the same applies to the training walks leading up to the event.

Keeping both energy and hydration levels high will make strenuous portions of the walk feel far more manageable.

Even if you do not feel particularly hungry, you must eat or your stamina will deplete. Use your training to trial different foods and see what works for you. Remember, everyone is different and after 20 plus hours on your legs, you will find that certain foods will agree with you better than others.

Food Advice

Carbohydrates (sugar and starch) are the most important source of energy for walkers. They are easily edible and require little oxygen and water to be transformed. Carbohydrates provide the ongoing fuel needed to replenish glycogen stores.

The amount of protein should be around 10-20% of your daily intake. Protein is needed to help prevent excess deterioration of lean muscle mass.

Hydration Advice

During physical exertion it is crucial to replenish fluids for optimal hydration and energy, essentially for the brain and muscles to continue their work. Sports drinks containing electrolytes and vitamins are significantly better absorbed, and help to replace energy, electrolytes, vitamins and other nutrients essential for performance.

The importance of drinking water and energy drinks before, during and after training cannot be over emphasised. Being thirsty and having a dry mouth are the first signs of dehydration. Other signs are: dizziness, headache, mental irritation or depression, fatigue, water retention, lower back pain, recurring or chronic pain, decreased urine output and colour, heartburn, stomach ache, sunken eyes



The Training Programme

There are various ways to train for your challenge that can be adapted to fit into your personal lifestyle.

The training plan is based around gradually increasing your mileage through various forms of exercise. Below is a list of recommended training that will help build up your strength and core fitness and help you complete The Thames Path Challenge.

Aerobic conditioning - This will form the core of your training through regular walks, building up to longer distances and faster paces. Aerobic exercise trains the energy systems of the body that utilise oxygen and is used during all heightened activity. Don't neglect hill training as this will be key to getting the body used to the terrain you can expect to experience.

Cross-training – Just walking to build up fitness levels can become monotonous so consider using different forms of exercise to keep your training varied and interesting. Team and racket sports or cycling, for example, can work well within a training programme for an event such as this and means you don't have to drop all of your other interests. The key is to undertake regular aerobic exercise with a long walk once a week.

Interval Training - Interval training can be best described as bouts of intense exercise interspersed with short rest intervals. The intensity and duration of the work intervals and the length of the rest periods dictates output and effectiveness of your training. Alternate between brisk walking or running for up to a minute, and then return to original pace for a set period before repeating.

Strength Training - Basic strength programmes adapt the body for more strenuous resistance training. This targets the major muscle groups, tendons, ligaments and joints to help prevent injury. Relevant exercises can include squats, bench press, overhead press, leg press and calf press, leg extensions and leg curls.

Don't forget!

- Enjoy your training! Don't see it as a chore, keep things fun and simple and you'll enjoy the whole experience.
- Always warm up for at least 10 minutes before undertaking any exercise and cool down for at least 10 minutes afterwards.
- If you miss a session then it's not the end of the world. Don't push yourself to try and make it up, 1 session won't make too much difference in the end.
- Approach your training in a structured way, and make sure you allocate sufficient time to get some long and tough walks in at the weekend.

Example Training Programme for 50KM

This is based on a 12 week training period, but you are strongly advised to build up your base fitness prior to this.

This is a sample training programme, which can be tailored to your own personal timetable.

This programme allows for flexibility of different activities and for you to fit your rest days around your daily week.

The maximum number of training days per week is 5 and you should be looking to try and train for 3-4 days out of 7 as a guide

WEEK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	REST	20 MIN AEROBIC	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	2 HOUR WALK	REST
2	REST	CROSS TRAINING	REST	40 MIN AEROBIC	REST	2 HOUR WALK	1 HOUR WALK
3	REST	30 MIN INTERVAL	CROSS TRAINING	50 MIN AEROBIC	REST	2.5 HOUR WALK	REST
4	REST	50 MIN INTERVAL	40 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	3.5 HOUR WALK	2.5 HOUR WALK
5	REST	35 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	50 MIN INTERVAL	REST	5 HOUR WALK	REST
6	REST	50 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	40 MIN AEROBIC	REST	6 HOUR WALK	REST
7	REST	1 HOUR INTERVAL	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	4 HOUR WALK	4 HOUR WALK
8	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	45 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	7 HOUR WALK	5 HOUR WALK
9	REST	50 MIN INTERVAL	CROSS TRAINING	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	10 HOUR WALK	REST
10	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	3 HOUR WALK	2 HOUR WALK
11	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	20 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	2 HOUR WALK	REST
12	REST	REST	30 MIN WALK	REST	REST	THE EVENT	

Example Training Programme for 100KM

This is based on a 15 week training period, that is designed to build upon an already established base layer of fitness.

This programme allows for flexibility of different activities and for you to fit your rest days around your daily week.

The maximum number of training days per week is 5 and you should be looking to try and train for 4 days out of 7 as a guide

WEEK	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	REST	20 MIN AEROBIC	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	2 HOUR WALK	REST
2	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	40 MIN AEROBIC	REST	2 HOUR WALK	1 HOUR WALK
3	REST	30 MIN INTERVAL	CROSS TRAINING	50 MIN AEROBIC	REST	2.5 HOUR WALK	1 HOUR WALK
4	REST	45 MIN AEROBIC	40 MIN INTERVAL	REST	1 HOUR WALK	3 HOUR WALK	REST
5	REST	CROSS TRAINING	45 MIN AEROBIC	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	3 HOUR WALK	1.5 HOUR WALK
6	REST	30 MIN INTERVAL	1 HOUR AEROBIC	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	4 HOUR WALK	REST
7	REST	50 MIN INTERVAL	40 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	3.5 HOUR WALK	2.5 HOUR WALK
8	REST	35 MIN AEROBIC	50 MIN INTERVAL	REST	1 HOUR WALK	5 HOUR WALK	REST
9	REST	50 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	40 MIN AEROBIC	REST	6 HOUR WALK	REST
10	REST	1 HOUR INTERVAL	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	4 HOUR WALK	4 HOUR WALK
11	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	45 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	REST	7 HOUR WALK	5 HOUR WALK
12	REST	50 MIN INTERVAL	CROSS TRAINING	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	10 HOUR WALK	REST
13	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	CROSS TRAINING	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	3 HOUR WALK	2 HOUR WALK
14	REST	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	CROSS TRAINING	REST	2 HOUR WALK	REST
15	30 MIN AEROBIC	REST	30 MIN WALK	REST	30 MIN WALK	THE EVENT	

