Boundary Waters Adventure 2O23

**July 9 - 16, 2023**

Sponsored by: *United Church of God, an International Association*

***CONDITIONING GUIDE***

*Disclaimer: This document is intended to provide overall guidelines and ideas for physical conditioning in preparation for the Boundary Waters Adventure 2020 program. It is not intended to be a specific training regimen or requirement for a given participant. It is highly recommended that each participant consult with his/her licensed medical physician before deciding upon a workout program that best meets his/her needs and physical limitations.*

**A. Overall Training Principles**

1. Frequency. Best results are obtained if a person maintains a regular schedule of exercise. Most trainers recommend 4 – 5 days a week. It is just as important to rest 2 days throughout the week from rigorous exercise. Intense workouts actually break-down muscle tissue – which is rebuilt during rest.

A 60-minute workout per day is optimal and with good planning, should be able to fit into most schedules. This would include 30-40 minutes of cardiovascular / aerobic exercise and 20-30 minutes of muscle workout.

2. Cardiovascular & Aerobic. To improve aerobic and cardiovascular conditioning, it is best to maintain an elevated heart rate – 1.5 to 2 times your resting heart rate – for at least 30 minutes continuously.

3. Muscle Training: Upper Body vs. Lower Body. Most people involved in muscle training (weight-lifting and muscle building exercises) usually alternate days between upper-body and lower-body workouts – in order to allow the other set of muscles a day to rest and rebuild. For example: on Monday, a person may do his aerobic workout + all upper body strength training; on Tuesday, a person would then do his aerobic workout + lower body strength training (and then continue to alternate throughout the week).

In weight training, you have the option of using heavier weights with fewer repetitions (reps), or somewhat lower weights with higher number of reps. While you need a sufficient level of weight to challenge and build muscle, generally it is recommended to have somewhat lower weights and a higher number of reps. This will serve you better for this program, where we will be paddling or hiking for extended periods of time.

A final note with regards to weight training: whenever possible, do each arm (and each leg) separately. If done together, your stronger arm or leg will always compensate for the weaker one. For example: if you are doing arm curls, use a separate dumbbell for each hand/arm, rather than one bar for both arms at the same time.

4. Form. Very important in any exercise – especially weight lifting – is using the correct form / technique. This can greatly increase the effectiveness of the exercise and reduce the risk of injury. Consulting a coach or personal trainer (if you are unfamiliar with an exercise) may be a good idea.

5. Diet. It does little good to give your body a good workout – but then not the nutrients to build itself back up. The best nutrition consists of a healthy balance of fresh foods that include protein (meat, nuts, milk), vegetables, fruits and complex carbohydrates (whole grain breads & rice). Foods to minimize would be almost all processed foods (especially processed carbohydrates and sugars), sweets, “junk food”, snack-foods and soft-drinks. While alcohol can have positive effects in moderation, it can also contribute to unwanted weight gain.

6. Stretching. Do not underestimate the value of careful stretching before and after working out. This can greatly reduce the risk of stress injuries and help you to feel “less sore” after a workout.

7. Start Slow – and then Increase. If you are not used to regular exercise, you won’t become a “fitness machine” overnight. For aerobic and cardiovascular, do what you reasonably can – that is still somewhat of a challenge – for 30 minutes and then increase speed or resistance on a progressive basis. In weight training, start with a lower weight, and increase every couple of weeks.

With this in mind, it is recommended that you start now with a structured fitness program. Your body will need time to get adjust and improve to the level that is needed for the Boundary Waters Adventure.

*The items discussed above are general principles of exercise and fitness. Below are some more specifics related to our program.*

**B. Cardiovascular & Aerobic**

For this trip you will not only be carrying your own weight but during portages must carry considerable extra weight as well. If you are like most people, you are not accustomed to repetitious work of paddling canoe. It will be difficult if you do not build up your cardiovascular condition.

**The “30-minute Test”.** A good indicator of stamina needed for this adventure is the “30-minute Test”. Between now and May 15, go to a running track or route where you can calculate distance accurately. Using a stopwatch, run, jog or walk as far as you can in 30 minutes – with out stopping for anything. For guys, 2.5-3.0 miles (10-12 laps around a standard track) would good to aim for. For girls, 2.25-2.5 miles would be the target to aim for. Applicants will be asked to send their best 30-minute test results as a part of the application process. *If you cannot go for 30 minutes without stopping, then you need to work on your endurance.*

**C. Strength**

The guidelines below should provide a general indicator of your readiness for the regimen of this trip. The figures below range from the “low” end of ‘average’ to the “low” end of ‘excellent’, and are for ages upper teens through 20’s. The times given for jogging, swimming and cycling are from ‘very good’ to ‘excellent’.

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| **Activity** | **Fitness Test Range** | **Conditioning** |
| Sit-ups (crunches) | M=30-50/1 min.; F=25-43/1 min. | 75-100, 3-4 days per week. |
| Push-ups\* | M=30-50/1 min.; F=25-43/1 min. | 75-100, 3-4 days per week. |
| Pull-ups | M=8-15; F=3-8 | 15-25, 3-4 days per week. |
| Jogging/Walking | 1 mile in 7 minutes. | 30-40 minutes, 5 days per week. |
| Swimming (in lieu of jogging) | 400 yards in 7 minutes. | 30-40 minutes, 5 days per week. |
| Cycling (in lieu of jogging) | 4 miles in 12.5 minutes. | 30-40 minutes, 5 days per week. |
| Jump-rope (in lieu of, or in combination with, jogging) | (None specified.) | 30-40 minutes continuous (if done in isolation). |

M=male, F=female \*Girls modified push-up (from knees)

Start out easy and gradually increase. Pick an aerobic activity and gradually increase your exercise duration (right column above). If you have rarely (if ever) done athletic conditioning, you may want to invest some time and money in the services of a personal trainer at a local fitness club. The cost is not that high – but they can provide excellent advice on specific workouts for this type of activity.

For *overall* conditioning for canoeing, a ***focus on the body core matters the most.*** Oblique twist and pull-down exercise are useful, as is the simple plank. Building arms strength is good, but pull ups and other exercises for the latissimus muscles are more important than building up biceps and triceps. Exercises that strengthen the rotator cuff (shoulder muscles) will also be very helpful. Various fitness guides may be consulted for instruction in these.

To prepare for portaging, it’s hard to beat simply walking up hills – with a backpack! This isn’t always possible depending on where you live. But if there’s any way you can get a pack on and find a high hill to walk up—or even flights of stairs—you’re going to get both cardiovascular and muscular conditioning you need for the real thing. Start with 10 or 15 pounds of weight in your pack and build up to about 40 pounds, over the course of a month or two. You can load your pack with big bags of cat food, phonebooks, wood scraps, or anything else you can find. Just try to load the pack so the weight is distributed through the vertical length of the pack – i.e. not a big cast-iron dumbbell at the bottom of your pack (which is also very hard on seams). Aim for 30 minutes of uphill time.

To avoid undue pressure on your shoulders, use a backpack with a waist-band so that the majority of the weight is on your waist / hips – not your shoulders.

**Using a Fitness Center (YMCA, Planet Fitness, etc.)**

If you have access to, or can join a fitness center, this could be helpful, but is not necessary. Most fitness centers offer a variety cardiovascular-aerobic machines (treadmills, bikes, stair-stepper) and a variety of muscle-building equipment that can provide excellent workouts in preparation for the *Boundary Waters Adventure.*

Still, I will add that I have done the large majority of my own conditioning by running outdoors in my neighborhood and doing various exercises in my own home. The most important thing is to have a regular routine and to stick with it!