

No Matter What Adventure Retreat

4-Week Hike Prep Training Plan

This plan is built on progressive overload: each week asks your body to do slightly more, on purpose, by changing one thing at a time, distance, load, or intensity. Never all three in the same week. Four weeks is enough time to build real trail readiness without burning out before hike day.

Disclaimer: This is general fitness guidance, not personalized medical advice. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise, hydration, or supplement routine, especially if you have an existing health condition.

Week 1: Build the Base

Focus: Aerobic base, movement quality, and consistency, before any load gets added.

Cardio (3x this week)

- 30 to 40 minute brisk walk or incline treadmill, moderate effort (you can talk in full sentences, but it takes a little work)

Strength (2x this week, full body)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Bodyweight squats	2 x 12 to 15	Slow and controlled, full range
Reverse lunges	2 x 10 each leg	Hold a wall or chair for balance if needed

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Glute bridges	2 x 15	Squeeze glutes at the top
Standing calf raises	2 x 15	Slow on the way down
Plank	2 x 30 to 45 sec	Straight line from head to heels
Single-leg balance reach	2 x 8 each leg	Trains the stability your ankles and knees need on uneven trail

Mobility (daily, 10 minutes)

- Half kneeling lung stretch, both sides
- Ankle circles and calf stretch
- Thoracic (upper back) rotations

Weekend Hike

3 to 4 miles, easy terrain, no pack. The goal is time on your feet, not speed.

Fuel & Hydration This Week

- Build the habit: water bottle with you all day, aim for about half your bodyweight in ounces daily as a baseline
- Simple pre-workout snack: banana or a slice of toast with nut butter, 30 to 60 minutes before
- Post-workout: a source of protein within an hour (Greek yogurt, a protein shake, eggs) to support recovery

Week 2: Add Load

Focus: Introduce a pack and heavier resistance. Raise one variable this week, not two.

Cardio (3x this week)

- 40 to 45 minute hike or stair climbing, wearing a light pack (10 to 15 lb)

Strength (2x this week, full body)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Weighted step-ups (12 to 15 in box)	3 x 10 each leg	Use dumbbells; drive through the heel
Walking lunges with dumbbells	3 x 10 each leg	Keep the front knee tracking over the foot
Dumbbell Romanian deadlifts	3 x 10	Hinge at the hips, soft knees
Plank with shoulder taps	3 x 30 sec	Keep hips as still as possible
Single-leg deadlift (bodyweight or light dumbbell)	2 x 8 each leg	Builds the balance you need on rocky trail
Farmer's carry	2 x 40 meters	Heavy dumbbells or kettlebells, walk tall

Mobility (daily, plus one recovery session)

- Continue daily hip, ankle, and thoracic mobility
- Add one yoga class or dedicated stretching session this week

Weekend Hike

5 to 6 miles, moderate elevation gain, light pack.

Fuel & Hydration This Week

- Add electrolytes (sodium, potassium, magnesium) on training days, especially anything over 45 minutes or in the heat
 - On-trail snack: trail mix, a granola bar, or dried fruit, about every 60 to 90 minutes
 - Keep post-workout protein consistent: aim for 20 to 30 grams within an hour of finishing
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Week 3: Peak Volume

Focus: This is the dress rehearsal, the closest simulation of hike day. It is also the biggest week for both fitness gains and fatigue.

Cardio (2 to 3x this week)

- Hikes with a full pack (15 to 20 lb), including one longer effort of 60 to 90 minutes

Strength (2x this week, full body)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Weighted step-ups (higher box or heavier load)	3 x 12 each leg	Progress load or box height from Week 2
Bulgarian split squats	3 x 10 each leg	Rear foot elevated on a bench or step
Loaded carries (farmer's or suitcase carry)	3 x 40 meters	Increase weight from Week 2
Single-leg Romanian deadlift with dumbbells	3 x 8 each leg	Focus on control over speed
Weighted plank or plank variation	3 x 45 sec	Add a light plate on the back if ready

Mobility (daily, plus recovery)

- Daily mobility routine
- Add foam rolling or a massage session, this is a heavy-load week

Weekend Hike

7 to 9 miles with real elevation gain, ideally with the full pack and gear you plan to wear on

retreat.

Fuel & Hydration This Week

- Increase carbohydrate-rich snacks around long training days (oatmeal, rice, fruit) to keep energy up
 - Practice your actual hike-day fueling strategy now: aim for 150 to 250 calories every 60 to 90 minutes on the longer hike
 - Electrolytes on every long or hot session, not just plain water
 - This is the week fatigue peaks. Prioritize sleep and don't skip recovery meals
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Week 4: Taper & Arrive Ready

Focus: Recovery is the training now. The taper is what lets the last three weeks of work show up on the trail.

Cardio (2x this week)

- Two short, easy walks or hikes, 20 to 30 minutes, no pack
- Cut total volume by 40 to 50% compared to Week 3

Strength (1x this week, light)

Exercise	Sets x Reps	Notes
Bodyweight squats	2 x 12	Light and easy, technique focus
Reverse lunges	2 x 10 each leg	No added weight this week
Plank	2 x 30 sec	Well below max effort

Mobility (daily)

- Keep the daily mobility routine going
- Prioritize sleep, 7 to 9 hours a night this week

Weekend Hike

Optional short, easy outing only. Save your legs for the trail.

Fuel & Hydration This Week

- Increase water intake in the days before travel, especially once you arrive in Vail (base elevation over 8,000 ft)
- Go easy on alcohol the night before the hike, it compounds altitude dehydration
- Pack your hike-day snacks now so nothing is new or untested on trail day

General Hydration, Snacks & Supplements

These apply across all four weeks, and matter most on hike day itself.

Hydration

- Daily baseline: about half your bodyweight in ounces of water
- On the trail: 0.5 to 1 liter per hour, more in heat or at higher exertion
- Add electrolytes (sodium, potassium, magnesium) on the trail rather than relying on plain water alone. This matters more at altitude, where fluid loss increases and plain water alone can dilute sodium levels

Snacks

- Trail mix, nut butter packets, dried fruit, energy or granola bars, bananas, jerky, pretzels
- Aim for a mix of carbohydrates with a little protein and fat, about 150 to 250 calories every 60 to 90 minutes during long efforts
- Pre-hike meal: balanced carbs and protein, 2 to 3 hours before starting (oatmeal and fruit, or eggs and toast)
- Post-hike recovery: protein and carbs within an hour of finishing (a protein shake, Greek yogurt with fruit, or chocolate milk)

Supplements (optional, check with your doctor first)

- **Electrolyte tablets or powder:** especially useful on training days over 45 minutes and on hike day itself
- **Protein powder:** an easy way to hit daily protein targets for muscle recovery during the build weeks
- **Magnesium:** some people find it helps with muscle cramping and sleep quality during heavier training weeks
- **A basic multivitamin:** general nutritional insurance if your diet is inconsistent during

training

- **Caffeine:** can help with endurance performance if you're already used to it. Hike day is not the day to try something new

A Note on Altitude

If you're coming from a lower elevation, arriving a day or two early to acclimate helps. Drink more water than feels necessary, ease up on alcohol, and know the early signs of altitude sickness: headache, nausea, dizziness, and unusual shortness of breath. If those show up on the trail, tell a facilitator and don't push through.

Notes

- Break in your boots well before hike day. Never wear brand-new footwear on the trail
- Train with the pack and layers you'll actually wear at altitude, not just at the gym
- Listen to your body. Adjust intensity as needed, and check with a doctor before starting any new exercise, hydration, or supplement routine