

It's one thing to plan for a day hike, but multi-day hikes are a whole different kettle of fish for a variety of reasons. Particularly for those who are attempting one for the first time. In this blog I'll go over some of the things you should do to prepare yourself for a multi-day hike.

## Get used to the food

The food you take on a multi-day hike will come down to personal preference. What I will say is that your food decisions should be based on two factors: weight and calories. All your food should be relatively lightweight and full of calories so you can get the energy hit you need. It's a good idea to make sure you're well-fuelled when you're training for a long hike, and it's a good opportunity to get used to the foods too. Some foods that are light in weight but packed with calories include Snickers, Peanut M&Ms, trail mix, wraps, [Clif Bars](#), packet pasta, tuna (in a sachet, not in a tin), beef jerky, and [freeze-dry meals](#) if you're carrying a stove.

## Carry the right gear

With regards to gear, and especially clothing, you will need to factor in the weather. If you know it is going to be stinking hot then you probably don't need a raincoat. In saying that, if you know the weather can change at any point in the time you're in the area, perhaps you might need that raincoat after all.



*Preparing for a multi-day hike a little closer to home. Not exactly the backcountry, but the hills around Marysville are a fine training ground for bigger things.*

The point to remember is that you don't necessarily need the lightest gear and clothing on the market. I'm a firm believer that there is 'good weight' and there is 'bad weight' when it comes to gear. So if you have a jacket that weighs a kilo and it will keep you warm at night, then take it with you. Wear your trekking clothing while you train to get used to it.

To get your pack 'game fit', and to ensure the load is balanced correctly, consider stuffing it with the gear you intend to take on your hike. Weights and bottles filled with water may help weigh the pack down, but won't sit the same way a [properly packed rucksack](#) will.

## Carry a heavy pack

If you know you are going to be carrying anywhere between 15-20kgs on your trip, then start off by going on hikes with 5kgs in your backpack. Once you are used to doing that, bump it up to 10kgs and so on.

The key is to not shock your body straight away. You'll be better off gradually getting your body used to carrying a significant load on your back. That way, when it comes to doing said 45km hike, your body won't be screaming at you on day one because you will have put in the necessary groundwork.



*The Tongariro Alpine Crossing on the North Island of New Zealand takes hikers well above the treeline into rough, alpine terrain. It's not the sort of track to do without some preparation.*

## Get used to hiking, by hiking

Getting your body physically ready for a multi-day hike can be determined by a number of things. This can include the distance of the overall trip, days spent out on the trail, how difficult the trail is, and so on.

I'm a firm believer in practicality. If you want to come away from that 45 kilometre, 3-day hiking trip, feeling fit, then going to the gym won't help. You actually need to get out onto the trail and try and replicate what you are going to be doing. So, if you know there are going to be plenty of hills where you are going, go and find a trail that has plenty of hills nearby and start hiking those bad boys.

I've previously shared some [great day hikes near Melbourne](#) that are the perfect places to train - and there are similar lists for those of you who are training in [Adelaide](#), [Perth](#), and [Brisbane](#).

Hike these tracks with some weight in your backpack as mentioned before.



*Hiking the Wellington Plains in the Victorian Alpine National Park.*

## This method is tried and tested

I know this method works because I did exactly the same 'training' to get my body and mind into shape for my 10 day, 240km hike across New Zealand last year.

This was my first significant multi-day trek. So I spent almost 12 months going on as many day hikes and multi-day hikes as I possibly could to get myself into shape for that.

If this is your first multi-day trek or if you're heading out for a longer period, make sure you get the necessary kilometres into your legs and kilograms on your back to ensure you finish your trip without collapsing in a heap.

And get used to carrying all that gear and fuelling your body with the right amount of calories.

***Do you have any pro tips for preparing for a long hike? Share in the comments below.***