



PREPARING FOR YOUR TREK

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

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What you eat and drink before, during and even after walks can help you to get the most out of your training prior to the National Forest Trek, taking place from Friday 9th to Sunday 11th September 2022. This guide provides you with an overview of some considerations for your nutrition and hydration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AS FOLLOWS:

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Pre-Training Walk

You wouldn't expect your car to drive with an empty tank, so why try and walk with one? It is important to fuel and hydrate your body prior to training walks, below are five top tips to consider when preparing for a training walk:

1. Consume a meal two to three hours before you set off.

Ideally your pre-walk meal would contain roughly half a plate of carbohydrate rich food (e.g. potatoes, pasta, porridge oats, rice, bread), a quarter of a plate of protein rich food (e.g. meat, fish, beans and pulses, yoghurt, eggs) and the final quarter of the plate should be packed with colour (fruit/veg). Good examples include scrambled eggs and spinach on toast; chicken and vegetable pasta; porridge made with milk and topped with berries.



- 2. Consume a carbohydrate rich snack 30-60mins pre-walk.** If you don't have time for a meal / struggle to eat pre-exercise or are going on a particularly long walk. Good options include: a handful of dried fruit, a banana, flapjack, smoothie, milkshake or cereal bar.
- 3. Try to avoid spicy, high fat (e.g. fast or fried food) and high fibre foods** prior to your walk to reduce the risk of GI discomfort (e.g. bloating, cramps, nausea, vomiting).
- 4. Hydrate!** Sip on fluids regularly to ensure you are hydrated pre-walk. Dehydration can affect the body's ability to function and make map reading particularly difficult.
- 5. Pack snacks and fluids to take with you.** It's unlikely you will be able to stop at a shop if you are walking through the countryside, so always be prepared. Check out the next section for ideas of snacks that will help fuel your walk.

Snacks During Training Walk

Throughout your training walks it is important to keep your energy levels topped up and to rehydrate as you will lose fluids whilst walking. If you are walking for prolonged periods (e.g. more than four hours), sip on fluids every 15 minutes and be sure to take several snack breaks.

Fluids such as water, (no added sugar) flavoured water and cordial are all good options. Try a variety of flavours during your practice walks as palatability makes a huge difference to the amount of fluid you consume – if you like it, you're more likely to drink it! To keep drinks cool whilst out walking, use an insulated reusable bottle or pop them in the fridge overnight prior to your walk.

Snacks are also a vital component of your training kit bag, but what are the best things to be eating on long walks?

Bananas, nuts and seeds, butterfly popcorn, flapjack, rice cakes, dried fruit and malt loaf are all great options for topping up your energy levels during training walks.

Flapjack Challenge

Flapjack is a great source of those all-important carbohydrates to help you get the most out of your training, so we are challenging you to make flapjacks at home. The recipe and ingredients are completely up to you! Why not try mixing in some dried fruit, desiccated coconut or drizzling with dark chocolate?

Post Training Walk

What do you do to recover after a long walk?

Stretch, soak in the bath or even have a snooze? All great options, but have you considered how your nutrition can help you to recover too?

After a long training walk it is important to refuel your body with food rich in carbohydrates, protein and fluids. These nutrients help your body to top up energy stores in your muscles; repair and build muscle; and replace the fluid lost through sweat so that your body is prepared for subsequent exercise.

To help provide your body with these nutrients it is a good idea to consume a recovery snack within one hour of finishing your walk, followed by a recovery meal within 2-3 hours.

Recovery Snacks

Examples of snacks that are rich in carbohydrate and protein, plus fluid options are detailed in the table below.

Carbohydrate Rich Snacks	Protein Rich Snacks	Fluids
Banana	Skyr/Greek Yoghurt	Water
Cereal Bar	Boiled Eggs	Cordial
Flapjack	Soya Milk	Milk
Butterfly Popcorn	Nuts and Seeds/Trail Mix	
Rice Cakes	Chicken	

Try consuming one item from each column to ensure you consume the nutrients you need for optimal recovery. For example, a banana plus a yoghurt and a glass of water provides the body with carbohydrates, protein and fluids. Tick, tick, tick!

Alternatively, some foods contain a good combination of carbs, protein and fluids, examples include:

- Chocolate milkshake
- Homemade smoothies (include yoghurt/milk for protein, banana/oats for carbohydrates)

Recovery Meal

Your recovery meal should contain roughly 1/3 plate of carbohydrate rich food (e.g. potatoes, pasta, porridge oats, rice, bread), 1/3 plate protein rich food (e.g. meat, fish, beans and pulses, yoghurt, eggs) and the final 1/3 should be packed with colour (fruit/veg).

Your recovery meal does not have to be boring; yes chicken, rice and veg contain carbohydrates, colour and protein but so do delicious dishes such as spaghetti Bolognese, chicken stir fry, jacket potato and chilli con carne packed with vegetables. You can treat your taste buds and help your body to recover!



General advice on nutrition and hydration

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrate rich food such as bread, porridge oats, pasta and rice provide our muscles with energy and are essential for fuelling your body for training! Try to consume some wholegrain carbohydrates with every meal and pack snacks such as bananas, cereal bars, dried fruit and flapjack to help fuel you during walks.

Hydration

It is recommended that each day we consume **at least** six to eight glasses, or two litres (more if it is warm, or you are exercising) of fluid such as water, cordial, low fat milk, tea and coffee. To help with this, always carry a water bottle and sip regularly, particularly on training walks!

Your urine colour can be an indicator of how hydrated you are; therefore, it is worth taking note throughout the day. If it is consistently dark, it is likely you are dehydrated and may need to drink some more fluids*. Dehydration can impact our mood, immune function and ability to concentrate, therefore it is important to stay hydrated!

*Be aware that multivitamin tablets and some foods (e.g. beetroot) may also affect your urine colour for a few hours.

Caffeine

Did you know? Caffeine, commonly found in coffee, tea and energy drinks, is a stimulant which can take your body up to 12 hours to breakdown. It can impair the quality and duration of your sleep if consumed too close to bedtime (some research suggests up to 6 hours before!). This means your 4pm coffee may be disrupting that all important night's sleep.

For optimal preparation, try setting a cut off time for caffeine consumption of 2pm. Are you worried you wouldn't be able to cope without it? There are decaffeinated alternatives!

Omega-3 Oily Fish

Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, mackerel and pilchards are all good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, consumption of which has been associated with decreased risk of heart disease, improved brain function and an anti-inflammatory effect which may help recovery from injury. Possibly useful if you have any niggles affecting trek training!

For more information about how much you should be consuming and what other foods contain omega-3, take a look at the British Dietetic Association's fact sheet [here](#).