

Climber Training Tips

1. Be an Educated Exercise Enthusiast

If you do two minutes of stair climbing – that's a couple of flights – five or six times a day, in eight short weeks you can:

- Increase your heart-lung fitness by almost 20 percent, upping your odds of a longer, better life.
- Reduce bad LDL cholesterol by 8 percent, and raise good HDL cholesterol by about that much, shrinking your risk of a heart attack, stroke and wrinkles (all are increased by LDL).

You gain the most benefit and lessen the risks when you exercise in your target heart rate zone. Usually this is when your exercise heart rate (pulse) is 80% to 85% of your maximum heart rate. Your maximum heart rate is the highest your pulse rate can get. To calculate your predicted maximum heart rate, use this formula: $220 - \text{Your Age} = \text{PREDICTED MAXIMUM HEART RATE}$

For example, a 50 year old would have a predicted maximum heart rate of 170 beats per minute ($220 - 50 = 170$). So, this individual's ideal target heart rate zone would be between 136-145 beats per minute ($170 \times 0.80 = 136$; $170 \times 0.85 = 144.5$).

2. It's as Simple as Stretching

Before climbing, you should perform some active stretching to "warm up" your muscles. Active stretches are a great way to improve flexibility, mobility and your sports performance. These stretches should focus on hamstrings, quadriceps and calf muscles. Marching in place, light jogging and easy squats will all increase blood flow to those muscles and prepare you for the big climb! Keep in mind that the "warm up" should not be vigorous or cause any fast breathing or muscle fatigue.

3. Pace Yourself

Increasing an exercise program to build strength and endurance is the ultimate goal, but be patient! Research indicates that increasing your activity by 10% every week is an appropriate guideline for progressing training programs. Each session should take about 20 or 30 minutes, three times a week. That just happens to be the same amount of moderate exercise recommended by numerous studies for optimum fitness. Be sure to space out these three days throughout the week to give yourself a chance to rest and recover between efforts.



4. Practice Makes Perfect

Incorporate training sessions in a real stairwell into your program. Use the stairs at work or in your apartment building. The closer it is to the real thing, the better! The next best option to train with would be to use a rotating stepping machine, commonly found at gyms, fitness and health clubs.

5. Focus on Fuel

Food is the fuel for our body! Maintaining a well-balanced diet will give you optimal energy to train for the stair climb. Avoid large meals the day of the climb. You may want a 200-300 calorie snack prior to start time.

6. The Wonders of Water

Did you know that we lose a pint or more of water every day simply by breathing? And, dehydration of just 1 percent of your body's water can make you physically or mentally weaker. Staying hydrated, especially while stair climbing, is so important! A key to successful workouts is keeping well hydrated before, during and after exercise. Start hydrating early by drinking 1-2 cups of water in the morning. Keep a water bottle with you all day long. Drink 1-2 cups before you exercise. Tip: Drink $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cup of fluid for every 15 minutes of exercise!

7. Building Strength

Like most cardiovascular exercising, stair climbing requires a basic foundation of strength. Predominately the lower body muscles are worked, including quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteal muscles, hip flexors and calves. Squats, lunges, leg extensions, leg curls, hip abduction, hip adduction and calf raises are all examples of exercises to target the muscles working during stair climbing. As a general rule, each muscle that you train should be rested one to two days before being exercised further in order for the fatigued muscles to rebuild.

Beware "No pain, no gain." This statement is not only false, but can be dangerous. Your body will adapt to strength training, and will reduce in body soreness each time you work out.

8. The Hip Bone is Connected to the Knee Bone

With good movement, mechanics and proper shoe wear, stair climbing will not cause excessive wear on your bones and joints. Proper stair climbing posture means:

- Neck and shoulders should be relaxed.
- Look forward but periodically look down to check for the stairs.
- Avoid bending the neck to look down for extended periods of time.
- The entire foot should be placed on the step.
- Do not allow the heels to hang off the edge of the step.
- Keep your trunk upright and avoid excessively bending forward.
- Avoid locking (over straightening) your knees while climbing up.

9. Pain During Training

If you start to experience pain or discomfort that persists following exercise, then decrease the time or intensity at which you are exercising. You may also try applying ice to the painful area, elevation, and gentle range of motion or movements. If the pain continues or gets worse after 48 hours, contact your personal physician to review prescribed medication or other treatment options.

10. Enjoy Climbing for a Cause

Recruit friends and family to join you as you increase your fitness level! Having a climbing "buddy" can be fun and motivating. Stair climbing may be the fastest and most convenient way to get an excellent aerobic workout, no matter what your fitness level.



DISCLAIMER

It is strongly recommended that you have your physician's approval to participate in exercises like SkyRise Chicago. Please be sure to know and understand the potential side effects of all medications and supplements you will be taking on the day of the event.