

# The Six Month Workout Program

## What you'll need

First off, you don't need to belong to a gym to do this exercise program. Cardiovascular workouts, like walking or jogging, can be done anywhere outside. You will, however, need the following equipment:

Two 3- or 5-pound hand weights

Running shoes

Comfortable clothes

A straight-backed chair

A mat or blanket (if necessary)

## The list

Below are explanations of all the exercises you'll be doing during the program. Feel free to replace them with workout machines available at your gym, or other exercises that target the same muscle group.

**Aerobic exercise:** Spend at least 5 minutes warming up/stretching; then speed walk, jog, do an aerobics or strenuous yoga class, jump on a stairclimber, go biking, jump rope -- anything that will get your heart rate up. Then spend at least 5 minutes warming down/stretching. Ideally, you should alternate your aerobic activity so you don't get bored.

**Stomach crunches:** Lie on the floor -- you may want to use a mat or blanket -- with your knees slightly bent and your hands gently resting behind your head, elbows pointing out. Using your stomach muscles only, slowly lift your chest toward the ceiling, keeping your feet on the floor and your chin pointed toward the ceiling. Lower your head until your shoulder blades hit the floor -- but do not completely relax. Repeat.

**Push-ups:** Get down on your hands and knees. Rest all your weight on your extended arms, and keep your body straight. Slowly lower your chest toward the floor, keeping your chin up, and then raise until your arms are straight again. (You can keep your knees on the floor, but you should eventually try to use just your toes.) Repeat.

**Squats:** Stand with your legs about shoulder-width apart, toes pointing straight ahead. Put your hands comfortably on your hips (you can also hold hand weights). Slowly bend your knees, and pretend to sit on a chair, squeezing your butt and thigh muscles. Hold the pose, and slowly raise. Repeat. To alter this exercise: Point your toes out and feel the inner thigh muscles working.

**Bicep curl:** Sit in a chair with your legs shoulder-width apart. Put your hand weight in your right hand and rest your right elbow on the inside of your right knee. Place your left hand on your left knee to help balance. Slowly lower and raise your right hand, feeling the bicep working. Be sure to never fully lower or fully raise your arm -- keep the tension. Repeat with your left arm.

**Tricep curl:** Place your right knee and right hand on a chair. Holding your weight in your left hand, put your left elbow against your side, parallel to your back, keeping it bent. Lift your left elbow a few more inches toward the ceiling. Slowly raise your left hand toward the ceiling, feeling the tension in your tricep. Every time you extend your arm up, squeeze your tricep. Slowly lower your hand down. Repeat.

**Chest press:** Hold a weight in each hand. Lie on your back, with your knees slightly bent. Start with your arms extended in front of you: straight arms, palms to ceiling. Slowly bend your elbows, lowering elbows separately, so your arms end up at a 90-degree angle on either side of your body. Feel the tension in your chest area. Stop just before your elbows hit the ground. Slowly raise them back up. Repeat.

### **6 months and counting: Get moving**

In order to make sure that you are working out at a level that will do your body the most good, you'll need to find your target heart rate before beginning your program. To find your maximum heart rate (the highest your heart should be beating during your exercise session), use this formula: 220 minus your age (in years). Your target heart rate zone is usually about thirty to sixty beats per minute less than your maximum heart rate. Check your heart rate often during each workout.

Another thing you should do before beginning your plan is start a workout diary. Write down today's date, all the reasons why you need to work out, and what your goals are. To stay motivated, keep notes all the way through. This month, we want to focus on just getting active, and staying with the program.

Weeks #1 and #2 -- 20 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week.

Weeks #3 and #4 -- 30 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week.

### **5 months and counting: Pick up the pace**

Have you noticed any changes in your mental health? Keep writing in your journal, and pay special attention to how you feel, how you're dealing with stress, and what you think you are gaining from your exercise program. Remember: Check your target heart rate about 15 minutes into your aerobic exercise.

Weeks #5 and #6 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 2 sets of 10 stomach crunches; 1 set of 10 push-ups.

Weeks #7 and #8 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 10 stomach crunches; 2 sets of 10 push-ups.

### **4 months and counting: Keep going**

This is usually when people start to give up. Get out your diary, and flip back to your first entry. Remind yourself why you are doing this. Also, flip ahead in your calendar and check how quickly your departure day is approaching: Aren't you glad you started exercising weeks ago? Are you making progress? You should see some results in your muscle tone. (Don't forget, muscle weighs more than fat, so you might have gained a few pounds, but you've turned some of that fat into muscle.)

Weeks #9 and #10 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 10 stomach crunches; 2 sets of 10 push-ups; 1 set of 10 squats.

Weeks #11 and #12 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 10

stomach crunches; 3 sets of 10 push-ups; 2 sets of 10 squats; 2 sets of 10 bicep curls; 2 sets of 10 tricep curls.

### **3 months and counting: You're halfway there**

Take a minute to write a note of congratulations to yourself -- you're doing an amazing job (we know it sounds cheesy, but do it anyway). You've been working out for three months and you have three to go. If you've been following the program, you definitely should notice some changes by now. (If nothing has changed, you may need a more advanced program: talk to a personal trainer.)

Weeks #13 and #14 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 2 sets of 10 chest presses.

Weeks #15 and #16 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 3 sets of 15 chest presses.

### **2 months and counting: Time for target practice**

Okay, now let's get serious: There are only eight weeks to go until your departure date. Now, where do you still need the most help? Stomach? Thighs? Butt? Pick one or two areas, and focus, focus, focus. We're going to continue along the same program, but now we're going to add an intense three sets of 15 extra exercises for whichever area still needs help. With every crunch or set, envision yourself on the trail -- you'll get there.

Weeks #17 and #18 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 3 sets of 15 chest presses; 3 sets of 15 "extra target area."

Weeks #19 and #20 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 3 sets of 15 chest presses; 3 sets of 15 "extra target area."

### **1 month and counting: The home stretch**

Just four weeks to go! As you get closer to your departure date, you may notice the stress factor playing a major role. But if you've stayed with the program, you are going to be in much better shape than other non-active hikers. The way you feel should be motivation enough to keep exercising. We are going to continue working at the same level as last month. If you're having trouble finding the time to keep up this pace, cut back the number of sets you do, but use heavier weights.

Weeks #21 and #22 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 3 sets of 15 chest presses; 3 sets of 15 "extra target area."

Weeks #23 and #24 -- 40 minutes of aerobic activity at least three times a week; 3 sets of 15 stomach crunches; 3 sets of 15 push-ups; 3 sets of 15 squats; 3 sets of 15 bicep curls; 3 sets of 15 tricep curls; 3 sets of 15 chest presses; 3 sets of 15 "extra target area."

You did it! You are an incredibly strong, beautiful, and dedicated person. Which means we don't even need to tell you to keep exercising after Philmont.