

Mix up hiking style to enhance performance

Outdoor activities promote leg strength, power and energy system development, or cardio. Recent weather has prohibited outdoor energy system development training. Of course, there are those who have challenged the rain, but there is something to be said about sunshine in the mountains. For example, this weather has dashed some hopes of hiking Snow King with regularity. I was recently asked during a group training session how to regain what was lost of energy system development efficiency so Snow King is not so difficult for the lungs.

To explain energy system development, I provided an insert from the *Core Performance* book by Mark Verstegen.

"Unlike traditional cardio work, ESD focuses on quality, not quantity, and trains the lactate (high-intensity work for up to 3 minutes), alactate (high-level work for periods of up to 12 seconds), and aerobic systems (the ability to work beyond 3 minutes). For instance, if you are sprinting up hills and walking down, you

are using the lactate system on the way up and the aerobic system on the way down. In this case, the aerobic system enhances your recovery from these intense bursts of energy. ESD improves the function of the entire cardiovascular system while building endurance and helping the body tap into new energy levels."



Training to be balanced

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level of training. Using Snow King as an example:

Stage zero: Consult with your physician before embarking upon any of the following exercise regimens, for this type of training may not be appropriate for everyone.

Stage one: Hike up Snow King from start to finish to establish a base line. Use what you feel as a moderate hiking pace and stop if you have to catch

your breath. Use the same equipment you will continue to use every time you hike up Snow King, such as CamelBak, water bottle, hiking poles, etc. Also, you want to gauge progression in some manner of total time, pedometer, heart-rate average, number of stops ... your choice. To be done once.

Stage two: Hike faster than normal. Do not be concerned if you have to stop to catch your breath, but do note total stop time or recovery time of pre-hike heartbeat. Perform twice a week.

Stage three: Hike with a 5- to 20-pound backpack. The pace can follow normal hiking as in stage one or stage two. Either way is fine and the mix-up does great for your lungs. Once a week will suffice.

Stage four: Pick a longer hiking trail, like Old Pass Road, Rendezvous Mountain or Goodwin Lake, following stage one rules. Once a week is adequate.

Stage five: Hike up Snow King just a bit faster than normal hiking speed and perform a set of 10 squats at each switchback. Feet are wide and pointing out to side. Concentrate on using the glutes and hamstrings. Continue hiking after the completion of the squats. Perform twice a week with three-four days in between.

Stage six: Hike up Snow King and compare to stage one. Improvement

and overall feeling of lung endurance should be enhanced.

Now, before my name is cursed if you don't see dramatic results, take in the following considerations:

This type of program is standard and may not work for everyone. Avoid talking while hiking unless you consistently hike with a buddy. Insistent hiking, travel to sea level for long stays, allergies (not allergies to exercise, ha), stress, injury, recovery, over-reaching (like over-training), and nutritional needs all affect the success you will have. If you want specific guidelines for you, e-mail me at augie@t2bb.net. I will be more than happy to answer any questions.

Improvements can take up to two weeks or all summer, depending upon current level of training and frequency. Also, concentrate using the glutes and hamstrings during any hikes and use poles to descend, which happens to be the next month's topic: knee pain on the descent.

Enjoy the weather, get outside and don't forget your bear spray!

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