



Planning for Success on Your Trip

Having the Right Attitude

We want your trip to be a success and we will do everything we can to make it happen. But mountain environments hold many unknowns and, while this is part of the attraction to wilderness-based trips, it also means that we can't always get to the summit or follow the planned itinerary. Please be flexible and prepared for changes due to weather or unforeseen circumstances.

We also ask that you recognize that our guides are trained to make the best in-the-field decisions to ensure your safety. We know that it is disappointing to change plans, objectives or not to make the summit, but the mountains are always going to be there; we feel our responsibility is to make sure that you are able to keep coming back to enjoy them!

The Right Trip

Each trip's information page has prerequisites spelled out for that trip. It's important that you understand these prerequisites and meet their requirements! When in doubt, please call us and we'll do our best to help find the trip that best matches your skills and goals. We can always change the itinerary or objective. For technical climbing routes you may be climbing 5.6-5.10 at a high elevation. Depending on your route your goal is to be able to climb two grades harder at your local crag or at your gym.

For hiking trips you might be carrying a multi-day overnight pack. This is a lot harder than carry a day pack for an afternoon, so make sure you are used to the full pack. On trips such as the JMT you will be out for several weeks and this can wear you down just as easily as building you up. If you have any doubts please talk to us since we want you to have a fun rewarding trip and not to leave disappointed.

Training

To get the most out of your trip you need to be in the right shape for it. There is no fun in barely surviving the program just to tag the summit. We have some suggestions for training so please take a look at these on our.

Technical Climbing

- 8-12 hour hikes (including hills are more beneficial) with a 30lb pack
- Indoor Gym Climbing:
Endurance work-out: Laps on routes that are moderate for you.
Power work-outs: hard routes for you
- Other Endurance Activities: swim, run, cycle, any and all hiking, backpacking...

Backpacking

- 8 hour hikes (including hills are more beneficial) with a 30lb pack
- Biking and swimming
- Endurance!

The mountains require endurance. Objectives are remote (miles in with substantial elevation gain) and you need the stamina to approach, climb, and descend all day (12hrs+). The day prior to a climb can consist of an approach with overnight packs. Climbs are long and sustained often with a gully descent. This means incorporating all day endurance training in to your regimen.

Acclimatizing

Here at Sierra Mountain Center, we want our guests to reach their goals, and those who feel well most often attain mountain goals! Since the average person actually requires several weeks of exercising at altitude to truly acclimatize, here are some tips for how you can feel your best...without arriving several weeks early! When we have guest unable to complete their trip or attain the summit the primary reason is lack of acclimatization to the elevation.

1. Hydration is a critical part of feeling good at altitude. This means being hydrated prior to the start of your trip, and then maintaining that hydration throughout your trip. This does NOT mean drinking a gallon of plain water before hand and being up all night using the restroom! Do increase your water intake coupled with electrolyte supplements for several days prior, and then increase your water intake slightly more while you are at altitude, again coupled with electrolytes. Without electrolytes, drinking extra water may only hurt you by stripping your body of necessary minerals. There are numerous Brands of electrolytes on the market, many of which are added to your water improving the taste, and some in come capsule form. Being meticulous with your hydration will have a significant improvement on your energy and recovery.

2. Rest If you tend to not sleep well at higher elevations, or do not know if you do, then please do not plan to sleep at one of the high elevation campgrounds to acclimatize the night before your trip. Sleep wherever you need to, in order to get the best rest, even if that means low elevation and/or in a hotel room. Being totally rested before your climb or hike, will allow your body to deal with the stress of exercise and especially at altitude. A poor night of sleep at altitude does not replace a good night of sleep on the valley floor! So arriving for your mountain journey rested and hydrated already has you on your way to reaching your goals!

200 South Main Street, P.O. Box 95, Bishop, CA 93515

office@sierramountaincenter.com

760.873.8526

ww.sierramountaincenter.com

3. Hike a Little. Now if you have a few days in the area before your trip, try to incorporate some small hikes at low intensity from higher elevation trailheads. Going for a hike to, and above, 10,000 feet will help your body begin to respond to the decreased oxygen supply. Then you can allow your body to recover from that slight strain by resting low. Many hikers and climbers have had great success with this technique for a very long time, which is where the phrase "climb high, sleep low" comes from. The higher trailheads with good day hiking include:
Cottonwood Lakes (trailhead elevation 10,000')
Kearsarge Pass (trailhead elevation near 10,000')
South Lake and Lake Sabrina (trailhead elevation 9,000+')

Rock Creek Canyon (trailhead elevation 10,300')

Mammoth Lakes area (virtually unlimited hiking at moderate altitudes).

Packing Properly

When packing, **STICK TO THE EQUIPMENT LIST**. Much of the gear on the list is a necessity and is not negotiable. Showing up without the proper gear means that you are not going on the trip. Having said that, we have far fewer problems with folks not bringing enough gear than we do with people bringing unnecessary items. And remember that usually we'll have group gear like food and tents to add to your load. Appropriate Footwear

One of the biggest issue we have is footwear. The biggest problem are boots that are too light rather than too heavy. This has to be sorted out before the trip since the opportunities for new boots at the trailhead are zero. For most trips lightweight tennies or approach shoes are too light. Carrying a pack over uneven ground requires ankle support. Snow requires a waterproof boot. When in doubt go for a boot rather than a shoe and talk to us if you have questions. The wrong boots can ruin a trip very quickly.

Staying Well-Fueled

Our scheduled backcountry trips include main meals such as: warm and quick breakfasts like two instant oatmeal packages, a lunch bagel sandwich and snack, and a dinner of soup followed by pasta, rice or chicken stir-fry, or on some trips a dehydrated meal. A dessert finishes the day! You need to bring your favorite snack items, cold drink mixes, and hot drinks. The longer the trip the more important it is to plan carefully. For your snacks we suggest one to four bar-type items per day, plus a small bag of snack mix (2 oz/day). For hot drinks bring individually packaged items that require the addition of hot water. We provide powdered milk.

Keeping the Bears Out of Bad Habits

People who leave food in their vehicles have conditioned the bears to know that cars = food. Many cars each summer get broken into by bears who are hunting for food. Do not leave any food or food packaging (wrappers, coolers, etc.) in your car. This includes any scented items such as toothpaste, deodorant, gum etc. In some places such as Whitney Portal the Forest Service will issue a citation for improper food storage. Bring a tarp to cover any peripheral items left behind.

Just in Case Travel Insurance

• **We very strongly suggest obtaining trip cancellation insurance.** We are not responsible for cancellation fees or costs arising from your changed or cancelled flights, lodging, or other its very nature, mountaineering and other backcountry adventures are an uncertain endeavor, and many factors can influence the outcome of a trip/course. Factors such as weather, route conditions, or your own abilities may create circumstances that make continuing with the climb unsafe or unwise, and you or your party may have to descend before reaching the summit or accomplishing your objectives. We rarely cancel a trip or course outright and we will offer options that will get you out in the mountains. Once a trip or class begins, we are unable to offer refunds for weather related cancellations, or for trips or classes that end prematurely due to weather, route conditions or circumstances within. If you decide for any reason not to begin or continue with your climb, no credits or refunds will be given. Unless you are willing to absorb the entire cost of your program in the event of a cancellation, it is essential that you obtain trip insurance to protect your investment. SMC is not liable for your decision not to take the trip insurance option.

Three insurance options are;

yonder.com

travelguard.com

worldnomads.com

• We do not provide rescue insurance. Membership in the American Alpine Club includes rescue insurance and is recommended. See www.americanalpineclub.org

We hope this information helps you with lodging and camping plans, and provides some guidance for the final days prior for your mountain trip. Planning for success is the first step in success, so please contact us if you need further guidance.

Helping you reach your Sierra Mountain goals!