

Wilderness Session Fitness Expectations

Although no previous backpacking or mountaineering experience is required (or expected) for participation in the CRMS Wilderness Session, arriving in good physical shape can make a big difference in your level of comfort and enjoyment of the experience. Often students are surprised by the significant physical challenges of working and backpacking at high elevation, indeed some students suffer unnecessarily until they improve their fitness level (usually by the end of the trip). This form is intended to suggest various fitness regimens that we feel will greatly enhance your Wilderness experience. We have found that one of the best first steps to enjoying your time in the outdoors is to prepare for the physical challenges you will face when undertaking outdoor pursuits; therefore, we offer the following fitness expectations.

Where to begin?

If you are already in **Average Shape** (undertake regular cardiovascular activity for 30-60 minutes several times a week), you may only need to add greater frequency and duration to your work outs. However, if you would consider yourself to be in **Poor Shape** (get little, or inconsistent cardiovascular exercise) you may find one or several of the following regimens helpful in attaining enhanced fitness. Your goal should be to strive to attain **Good physical shape** by the time you come to CRMS.

Please note the *type* of exercise is less important than the *frequency* of exercise. If you are beginning a new exercise regimen it is important to start out with shorter less vigorous workouts and to slowly build up to longer more sustained efforts. We suggest you start working out 4-6 weeks prior to arriving at CRMS (sometime in early July). Feel free to follow the regimens suggested below or mix and match your workouts.

Activity	Poor Shape → Begin here if you consider yourself to in poor shape	Average Shape → Progress to this column after 2-3 weeks	Good physical shape! Stick with your workouts; mix them up to keep invested
Walking or jogging	1-2 miles, 3x a week,	2-3miles, 3x a week	3-5 miles, 3x a week, (1 of these on a trail)
and/or Swimming	20 minutes, 3x a week	30 minutes, 2x a week, (walk or jog 2-3 miles or cycle 5-10 rolling moles) 1x a week	40 minutes, 2x week, walk or jog 3-5 miles or cycle 10+ rolling miles) once a week
and/or Cycling	4-6 flat miles, 3x a week	5-10 rolling miles, 3x a week	10-15+ rolling miles, 3x a week (once a week on hilly terrain)
Many other excellent forms of cardiovascular exercise exist and can and should be included, especially if you enjoy them. It is far easier to undertake exercise that you enjoy. Another way to better enjoy your workouts it to encourage someone else to join you			

How does CRMS define “good physical shape”?

While everyone has different base levels of fitness that are a result of genetics, as well as base levels of physical activity, we feel that being in good physical shape is evidenced by being able to accomplish the following activities several times a week in the designated times listed below:

- Walking 5 miles on a trail in ~ 1.25 hours
- Jogging 5 miles in under 1 hour
- Swimming 1.5 miles in ~ 45 minutes
- Cycling 15 miles on rolling terrain in under 1.25 hours

What if I am unable, or can't find adequate time to exercise?

While we are confident your experience will be more enjoyable if you arrive in good shape, don't worry. Any additional exercise that you can undertake will benefit your overall fitness. Your Wilderness Leaders have planned your trip to accommodate various levels of fitness and ability. The beginning of the trip will involve a service project with the U.S. Forest Service. For the Service Project groups will hike into a base camp, allowing for acclimatization, and to learn camp craft skills. While you may find yourself a bit uncomfortable with the physical challenges at first, you will gain strength, fitness, and competence as the week unfolds. You may even surprise yourself with what you are capable of by the time your Wilderness adventure comes to an end.