



THE MAY 50K FOR MENTAL HEALTH UK

12-WEEK TRAINING GUIDE



WELCOME

Congratulations on taking your first steps in achieving something awesome in support of Mental Health UK! A big thanks for joining the team as we're thrilled to have you on board for this epic trekking challenge. Below is a guide to help you prepare for your 50km trek along the spectacular Jurassic Coast.

PREPARATION

Preparation is key when it comes to taking on 50kms along the Jurassic Coast. Taking on this distance along the undulating coastline is a tough challenge however it's all for a fantastic cause who needs your support.

We strongly recommend doing both cardio and strength training in preparation for this tough challenge.

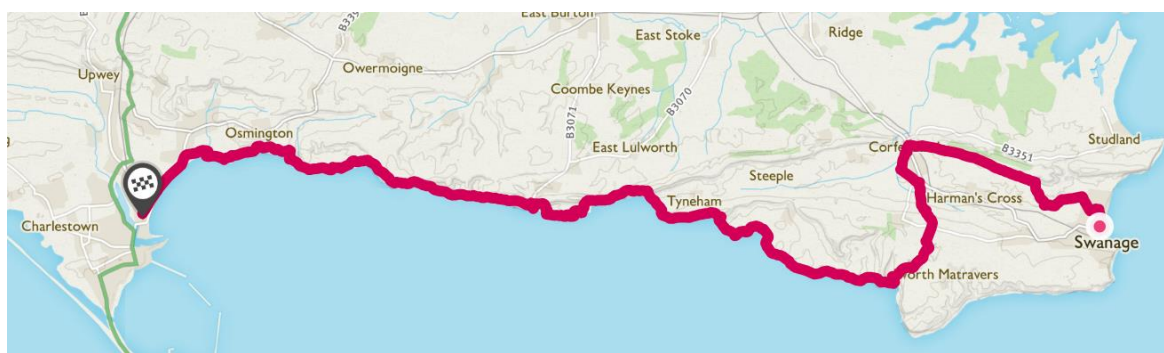
We also have exclusive offers with our Training Partners and Communities – **Her Spirit** and the **Bath Kettlebell Society**. For more info, please visit our [Training and Preparation](#) page.

The more you are prepared, the more you will enjoy the challenge.

Our motto is: Train hard, smile harder and enjoy the journey!

THE ROUTE

The route covers approximately 50kms between Swanage to Weymouth. Please see the map below.



TOP 10 TRAINING TIPS



1. Find the right footwear

Different hiking boots work for different people. Make sure you spend time trying on different styles and find something that is waterproof, lightweight, offers good support and grip that suits you for the trek. We recommend you wear them in too.



2. Use your kit

Use your kit as much as possible during your training walks including your boots, rucksack (packed with your waterproofs, warm clothing and a minimum of 2-litres of water) and trekking poles (if you plan to bring these). That way you will be familiar with your kit, know where it may rub and strengthen your body accordingly.



3. Train to time

Always thinking about how many miles you are covering can become stressful, which is why our training plans are mostly set to time. This means you can focus on building sustainably as the weeks go by.



4. Have a routine

Work life, family and social distancing restrictions mean that you might need to rework our training plans to make them fit around these areas. Schedule in your training for the days and times you know will give you the best opportunity to focus on each session and get the most out of it.



5. Set targets

Starting at the beginning of a training plan can be daunting, so try and break it up into manageable chunks and remember to reward yourself for reaching personal milestones! Mobile apps such as 'Strava' are a great way to monitor your progress for your outdoor sessions.



6. Add variety to your training

Include workouts which you can do from home if any further government restrictions come into play. Check out online fitness providers such as [Her Spirit](#), [Les Mills](#) or [Jennis Fit](#) for a wide variety of fitness programmes including HIIT (high intensity interval training). Or your local gym / leisure centre may be offering training sessions.



7. Increase your strength

For this challenge you'll be on your feet for long hours and covering undulating and uneven terrain, so building a strong core and having good posture will really help the miles feel achievable and reduce the likelihood of injury. Be sure to add yoga sessions, kettlebells or dumbbells into the mix and this will help with strength training, conditioning and balance sessions at home. Check out our exclusive partner-sheep with [Bath Kettlebell Society](#).



8. Fuel and recover

You need to take care of your body when you're training to reduce the risk of injury and fatigue, so we have included sections with information on stretching, energy and nutrition to make sure you're in the best condition you can be.



9. Plan your route

Look online for popular hiking trails in your area, ask friends and family if they have any recommendations or check out suggested routes on mobile apps such as Strava, Bikemap, etc. However, you do it, make sure you have a plan before you set off, so you can prepare for the distance you'll be covering and won't spend precious training time figuring out where to go. Make sure you have suitable clothing & equipment for the time of day too.



10. Cross training

To keep your training interesting and enjoyable whilst also developing other key muscle groups and fitness, take part in other activities. Cycling, swimming, rowing and many other sports will greatly help with your May 50K preparation and help maintain your training motivation as well.

KICK OFF YOUR TRAINING WITH THE RIGHT FOOTWEAR

BOOTS

Choose a comfortable pair of waterproof walking boots with ankle support and a stiff heel counter to give lateral support. The midsole should be firm yet comfortable. It is worth investing in a good pair of hiking boots, and appropriate socks. New boots must be worn in. Wear them around the house, on the way to work, etc, and then on longer walks. Once they have conformed to the shape of your feet there is less likelihood of getting blisters.

FEET FIRST

There are some common foot problems which are very easy to treat and avoid:

- To avoid blisters, keep your feet dry and wear socks made with fibres which draw moisture away from your skin - steer clear of pure cotton. Don't lace your shoes too tightly or too loosely. The irritation from the pinching and rubbing may cause blisters.
- Aching arches are usually caused by pounding when you walk. Make sure you touch the ground with your heel first and pushing off with your toe. Arch supports may help.
- Blackened toenails are caused by the big toe hitting the front of your shoe. Keep your toenails neatly trimmed. Make sure that if one of your feet is slightly larger than the other, as most are, that your boots fit the larger one.

TRAINING PLAN

INTRO

This training plan is designed to get you to the start line of your May 50K Trek feeling prepared and confident to achieve your goal.

1. Is this the right plan for me?

This 12-week plan is suitable for those who are just starting out and those who already hike regularly and are looking to increase the miles. It involves a mix of activities and exercises to get you in the best physical condition for your challenge. If you ever feel like you're struggling in the early weeks, you can always swap the longer hikes with more cross training or repeat a week in the plan if you don't feel ready for the next step just yet.

2. Why train this way?

If you keep doing the same thing over and over again you can't expect different results, so this plan is designed to give you variety and progression. To help you with motivation and record of progression, we recommend using mobile apps such as Strava.

3. What if I miss a session, get a niggle or become sick?

No training guide is designed to be a tablet of stone. View your May 50K training as a journey (which might not always go to plan!). Feel free to chop and change the plan and shift hike and exercise sessions to different days that may work better for you. If you miss days through work, holiday, sickness or injury then don't play catch up. Step back into the plan where you left off and be patient. Enjoy the journey as much as the end result.

4. Before and after

Always include a warm-up and cool-down session for each of the activities in the training plan, and stretch well using the exercises in this guide.

12 WEEK TRAINING GUIDE

| WEEK | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|----------|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Rest | Brisk walk | Core | Hilly hike | Staircase workout | Bike or Online training session | Hike |
| | Rest is vital to progression and adaptation. Stretches are always beneficial on rest days. | 30 x mins walk outside to include 3 x 5 min brisk effort & 2 mins easy recovery | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions (see conditioning section below). | 10 mins steady walking + 8 x 90 secs brisk uphill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking. | Please refer to the beginners workout plan detailed further down in this training programme | HIIT (high intensity interval training) programme or bike – 30 mins. | Easy walk 45 mins off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Rest | Brisk walk | Core | Hilly hike | Staircase workout | Online training session | Hike |
| | | 30 mins walk to include 5 x 4 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy effort recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 10 mins steady walking + 10 x 90 secs brisk uphill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking. | Beginners staircase workout | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme – 30 mins | Easy 1 hour walk off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Hilly hike | Staircase workout | Bike or Online training session | Hike |
| | Stretching well the day after your hikes will help you feel better as you move through the week ahead! | 40 mins walk to include 5 x 5 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy effort recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 10 mins steady walking + 12 x 90 secs brisk uphill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking. | Beginners staircase workout | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 40 mins | 2 hours steady paced walk off road if possible. |
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| 4 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Hilly hike | Staircase workout | Bike or Online training session | Hike |

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|----------|---|--|---|---|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | Remember to note down the positives at the end of each training week. | 40 mins walk to include 5 x 5 mins brisk effort, 60 secs easy effort recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 10 mins steady walking + 6-8 x 2 mins brisk uphill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking. | Beginners staircase workout | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 45 mins | 3 – 4 hours steady paced walk off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Rest | Easy hike | Core | Brisk hike | Staircase workout | Bike or Online training session | Hike |
| | Get into a good habit of regular stretching. | 45 - 60 mins easy walk at a conversational effort. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 40 mins walk to include 3 x 5 mins brisk effort & 90 seconds easy recovery. | Advanced staircase workout | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 50 mins | 3 - 4 hours steady paced walk off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Hilly hike | Staircase workout | Bike or Online training session | Hike |
| | | 50-60 mins walk to include 6 x 5 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 10 mins steady walking + 8 x 2-3 mins brisk up and down hill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking. | Advanced staircase workout | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 60 mins | 4 – 5 hours walk with some faster paced sections. Off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Online training session | Staircase workout | Fartlek hike/jog | Hike |
| | | 50-60 mins walk to include 3 x 10 mins brisk effort, 120 secs easy recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme – 50 mins | Advanced staircase workout | 45 mins hilly 'fartlek'. A mix of short and long faster efforts up and down hill as you feel during the hike using landmarks as targets. | 5 - 6 hours walk with some faster paced sections. Off road if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Online training session | Staircase workout | Fartlek hike/jog | Hike |

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|-----------|---|--|---|--|----------------------------|--|---|
| | | 50-60 mins walk to include 4 x 8 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme – 60 mins | Advanced staircase workout | 40-50 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk/jog using landmarks. | 6 - 7 hours steady paced walk with the final 30 mins to include brisk uphill efforts. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Bike or Online training session | Staircase workout | Fartlek hike/jog | Hike |
| | | 40 mins 'out and back' walk – walk out for 20 minutes, turn and get back to the start 2-3 mins quicker. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 60 mins | Advanced staircase workout | 60 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk/jog using landmarks. | 7 - 8 hours steady paced walk with the final 30 mins to include brisk uphill efforts. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Bike or Online training session | Staircase workout | Fartlek hike/jog | Hike |
| | This is a slightly lighter week to allow more adaptation to the training. | 40 mins walk to include 4 x 5 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 60 mins | Advanced staircase workout | 60 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk/jog using landmarks. | 6 - 7 hours steady paced hike over an undulating route if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Cross Online training session | Staircase workout | Easy hike | Hike |
| | Now we are in our peak training weeks work to make sure your nutrition and snacking between meals is spot on! | 40 mins 'out and back' walk – walk out for 20 minutes, turn and get back to the start 2-3 mins quicker over an undulating route. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | HIIT (high intensity interval training) or circuit programme or bike – 50 mins | Advanced staircase workout | 1 hour easy walk. | 2 hours steady paced hike over an undulating route if possible. |
| | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Rest | Brisk hike | Core | Easy hike | Trek briefing | THE MAY 50K | |
| | Look back on all your positives to see how far you have come! | 30-40 mins walk to include 3 x 5 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery. | On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions. | 30 mins easy walk. | | Good luck and enjoy the challenge! | Be proud of all you've achieved! |

STAIRCASE WORKOUT

Beginner staircase workout

If you're new to the staircase game, this is the workout for you. Before you begin, warm up with 5 minutes of squats and star jumps.

Perform each of the following exercises for 10–15 seconds. Once the exercise is complete, jog back down the stairs and begin the next one.

- **Walk or run:** 2 steps at a time
- **Sprint:** 1 step at a time
- **High knees:** 1 step at a time
- **Hop on one foot:** 1 or 2 steps at a time
- **Broad jump:** Jump with both feet over as many steps as possible

After each circuit, rest for 1–2 minutes. Repeat for a total of 15 minutes.

Advanced staircase workout

If you've completed 4 weeks of the beginner staircase workout, now's a great time to move onto the more advanced workout. Be sure to warm up with 5 minutes of squats and star jumps.

Perform each of the following exercises for 15–30 seconds. Once the exercise is complete, jog back down the stairs and begin the next one.

- **Sprint:** Clear as many steps as possible
- **Hop on one foot:** 1 or 2 steps at a time
- **High knees:** While facing right
- **High knees:** While facing left
- **Step hops:** Hop on and off the bottom step as quickly as possible, 10 reps per leg
- **Deep lunges:** 2 or more steps at a time

After each circuit, rest for 1–2 minutes. Repeat for a total of 20 minutes.

INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

Warm up and stretch

It's important to warm up before exercise and warm down afterwards in the correct way. This will help you avoid injuries and prepare your body for the exercise to follow. And don't forget – only stretch after your muscles have warmed up.

Have enough rest

Rest is as important as training. It's vital that you allow your body adequate time to recover, particularly from hard sessions, so make sure you have enough rest days.

Strengthen up

Doing regular core and lower-limb strengthening may help lessen the risk of injury and should be incorporated into your training programme early on. Ask physiotherapists, sports masseurs and gym instructors to show you exercises that will suit you.

Treat yourself to a sports massage

When the time is right, a sports massage can help speed up recovery from long training sessions and is an essential component of injury management. Most physiotherapists provide sports massage. Or find the details of qualified sports masseurs or sports therapists in your area in gyms, leisure centres or local sports stores.

KEY STRETCHES

Glutes

Sit with one leg out straight. Cross the other leg over, keeping knee bent. To feel stretch in backside hug bent knee into chest. Keep back straight.



Hamstring (origin)

Lay on back. Pull one leg up to chest and hug with both arms. Keep one leg straight on floor keeping ankle flexed.



Hamstring (belly)

Lay on back. Keep one leg on the ground. Raise other leg holding the back of the calf. Bring up to feel the stretch in the middle of the hamstring.

**Lower back**

Lay on back. Bring one leg up to chest and rotate to lower knee to floor using opposite arm as a weight. Keep one leg straight and both shoulders on floor. Other arm should be straight out at shoulder level.

**Quads**

Grasp the top of the ankle with the same side hand and bring heel to backside. Hips should be pushed forward.

**Hip flexors**

Kneel on one with a 90 degree angle at both knees. Push hips down and forwards until a stretch is felt at the front of the hip.

**Calf (gastrocnemius)**

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Take one foot forward and keep feet parallel. Maintain the arch in the forward foot by pressing down with the toes to stop foot rolling in. Straighten back leg and feel stretch in top area of the calf.

**Calf (soleus)**

Repeat position of the gastrocnemius stretch but this time bend back leg to take stretch into lower calf above Achilles.



CONDITIONING

Finger crusher

Get into a sit-up position. Find the natural arch in your back and place your hands under the arch. Engage your lower abs and pelvic floor and push your spine down onto your hands, trying to crush your fingers into the ground. Hold this for 45-60 secs per set.

The next level: Do small alternate leg lifts, while still keeping even pressure on your hands or extending in to 'bicycle' movement in and out with your legs.



Back extension

From a prone position with your toes on the ground and fingers on temples raise your chest off the ground by engaging your lower back muscles. After a few secs relaxed back to the ground and repeat for 45-60 seconds.

The next level: Extending your arms out in front of you with add a greater lever angle and make this exercise more challenging.



Plank

Lift your body up with your weight on your elbows and toes. Keep a straight line from the neck down through the legs to your ankles, engage all your core muscles by sucking your belly button up to the ceiling. Keep your chest over your elbows. Hold for 30-60 secs.

The next level: Add in small alternate leg lifts. If this is too hard to begin with, you can avoid lower back pain by doing this with your knees on the ground.



Side plank

Make a right angle with your supporting arm, your feet together and your stomach strong. Rise up, making sure you squeeze your glutes and push your pelvis through. Hold it for 30-60 seconds.

The next level: Lift your free arm into the air, keep your side really strong, and don't let your middle sag.



Bridge

From a sit up position raise your hips up so your body forms a straight line from shoulder to hips to knees. Hold this position for 45-60 secs by squeezing your glutes and your lower abdominal muscles.

The next level: From a 'bridge' position straighten one leg at a time aiming to not let your hips 'sag' as you do so.

**Single leg squat**

Stand on one leg, engage your glute on your standing leg, keep your hips facing forward and aligned with your knee and toe. Send your hips backwards whilst bending at the knee. You don't want your knee to roll inwards, so go down as far as you can without that happening before moving back to a tall standing position. Repeat 8-15 times.

The next level: You can use a Swiss ball or use a 'wobble board' under your foot.

**FOOD AND DIET**

What you eat when you start to train will impact on your exercise and energy levels. At first, while you're training at a low weekly time and mileage, concentrate on eating in a regular pattern and trying to cut your daily intake of saturated fats. Try to eat fewer fried foods and dairy products as these will counter any training you start doing. Here's what you should be eating:

Carbohydrates

As your mileage increases, make sure that at least one meal a day is high in carbohydrates – this will give you energy. Carbohydrates are mainly found in potatoes, bread, pasta and rice. Combine this with a good mixture of vitamins and minerals from fruit and vegetables. Bananas are a great natural source of energy.

Meat and fish

Meat and fish provide essential microproteins which help muscle development. If you want to be really healthy it's best to eat fish, and white meats such as chicken. If you eat red meat you should cut as much fat off as possible and cook it in a healthy way such as grilling.

Energy bars

There are a number of different energy bars on the market, all providing elements which help you maintain your energy should it start to flag on a long training session.

Fluids

You'll need to drink more fluid on a daily basis as you'll be losing more through sweating and exercising. You can also increase your energy levels by drinking electrolyte drinks, such as [Zero High Five](#) or [Nuun electrolytes](#). If you plan to drink electrolyte style drinks throughout your challenge event, make sure you get used to them while training.

Recipes

For more information and healthy cooking recipes, check out Kate Percy's books at: <https://www.go-bites.com/collections/books>

Basically, if you are careful with your diet, trying to eat more healthily and ensuring you eat plenty of carbohydrate before and after training sessions, you will be fine. You may well find yourself enjoying eating more as the guilt disappears because you know you have exercised!

ENJOY THE JOURNEY

You may not stick to the training guide exactly, but you need to keep it in mind and to do regular exercise every week according to the guide. You will enjoy this challenge far more if you are physically fit.

You've signed up to take part in an incredible event in support of a fantastic charity, so make the most of the experience, enjoy being in the great outdoors and know that you are helping people affected by mental health problems!

Train hard, smile harder and enjoy the journey.

#ewecandoit #TheDifferenceWeMake #mentalhealthuk

<https://mentalhealth-uk.org/>

