

20-Week Training Plan

Preparing for the Six Foot Track · 42 km · 3 Days

The Six Foot Track is Grade 4 (Challenging). Anyone with a reasonable fitness level can complete it, but preparation makes the difference between suffering and enjoying it. This 20-week plan builds you up progressively from a comfortable base to trail-ready.

Start this plan in early May for a 25 September hike. If you're starting later, jump into the phase that matches your current fitness level.

Key Training Principles

- **Specificity:** Train for what you'll be doing - loaded hiking on hills, not just gym cardio
- **Progression:** Increase distance, elevation, or pack weight by no more than 10% per week
- **Descent training:** The Blue Mountains' steep descents are hardest on knees - train downhill specifically
- **Rest & recovery:** Rest days are when your body adapts. Never skip them
- **Pack weight:** Train with your actual pack and gear from week 8 onwards

PHASE 1 - Foundation (Weeks 1–4)

Goal: Build aerobic base and establish consistent movement habits. Focus on form, not speed or distance.

Weeks 1–2

- Mon: 30 min brisk walk or easy jog
- Wed: Bodyweight strength - squats, lunges, step-ups (3 x 12)
- Fri: 30–40 min walk, hilly route if possible
- Sat: 60–75 min easy hike or long walk
- Sun: Rest or light stretching

Weeks 3–4

- Mon: 35–40 min cardio (walk/jog/cycle)
- Wed: Strength - add load (goblet squats, Romanian deadlifts, calf raises)
- Fri: 45 min hilly walk
- Sat: 90 min hike - choose a route with some elevation
- Sun: Rest or yoga/stretching

PHASE 2 - Building Strength & Endurance (Weeks 5–10)

Goal: Increase hike duration, introduce pack weight, and develop leg strength for steep terrain.

Weeks 5–6

- Mon: Strength - weighted squats, step-ups with dumbbells, core work
- Tue: 40 min cardio
- Thu: Strength - deadlifts, single-leg squats, calf raises
- Sat: 2-hour hike with 3 kg pack (start carrying your actual gear)
- Sun: Rest

Weeks 7–8

- Mon: Strength - increase weights from previous weeks
- Wed: 45 min cardio - include some incline intervals if possible
- Fri: 1-hour loaded walk with 4 kg pack
- Sat: 2.5-hour hike - choose route with 300m+ elevation gain
- Sun: Rest

Weeks 9–10

- Mon: Strength - focus on eccentric (slow downhill) step-downs, leg press
- Wed: 45 min cardio
- Fri: 1.5-hour loaded walk with 5 kg pack
- Sat: 3-hour hike - aim for 400m+ elevation gain and loss
- Sun: Rest

PHASE 3 - Progression (Weeks 11–16)

Goal: Build to full-day hikes with full pack weight. This is the most demanding phase.

Weeks 11–12

- Mon: Strength - heavy compound movements
- Wed: 50 min cardio (include incline if possible)
- Fri: 1.5-hour hike with 6 kg pack
- Sat: Full-day hike, 4+ hours, 500m elevation, 6 kg pack
- Sun: REST - active recovery walk only if feeling good

Weeks 13–14

- Mon: Strength (maintain, don't increase load)
- Wed: 45 min cardio
- Fri: 2-hour loaded walk or hike with 7 kg pack
- Sat: Full-day hike, 5+ hours, 600m elevation, 7 kg pack
- Sun: Rest

Weeks 15–16

- Mon: Strength (maintain)
- Wed: 45 min cardio

- Fri: 2-hour hike with full pack weight (7–8 kg)
- Sat: BIG training hike - aim for 20+ km, 700m elevation, full pack
- Sun: Full rest and recovery

PHASE 4 - Peak & Tune (Weeks 17–19)

Goal: Maintain fitness, iron out any gear issues, and build confidence.

Week 17

- Sat: Overnight training hike (2 days, 1 night) - a fantastic test of gear and fitness
- All other days: moderate exercise, nothing new

Week 18

- Sat: 15–18 km hike with full pack - final long effort
- All other days: lighter cardio and stretching

Week 19

- Short 8–10 km hike to stay loose
- Check all gear, replace any worn items
- Confirm transport and logistics for the hike

TAPER WEEK - Week 20 (Week before the hike)

Do NOT do any long or hard training this week. Trust your preparation.

- Mon: 30 min easy walk
- Tue: Light stretching and mobility work
- Wed: 20 min easy walk - stay loose
- Thu: Rest
- Fri: Final gear check. Pack your bag. Early night.
- Sat: HIKE STARTS - 25 September 2026

Important Notes

- See the Training Tips & Advice document for detailed guidance on descent training, water management, nutrition, and injury prevention
- Good Blue Mountains training locations: Kedumba Valley, Wentworth Falls, Megalong Valley, Mount Solitary approach
- If you experience pain (not soreness), stop and rest. Knee and ankle issues are common - address them early
- A physio check at week 8 is worth considering if you have any existing knee or hip issues