

THE MAY 50K FOR MENTAL HEALTH UK TRAINING PROGRAMME



WELCOME

Congratulations on taking your first steps in achieving something awesome this year and all in support of Mental Health UK! Plus, a big thank you for being part of the first ever May 50K for Mental Health UK! We're thrilled to have you on board.

Below is a guide to help you be prepared for your trekking adventure. Enjoy the journey.

PREPARATION

Preparation is key when it comes to taking part in the mighty May 50K for Mental Health UK. The level of difficulty is graded as 'Tough' given you will be trekking 50kms along the undulating Jurassic Coast in one day. The trek sees you walking on trails that can be muddy and rocky at times. There are plenty of hills and the best way to be prepared is to include all of these elements within your training. An appropriate level of fitness and overall endurance will go a long way to helping you enjoy this incredible challenge in support of people affected by mental health problems including friends, family and carers.

THE ROUTE

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



TOP 11 TIPS



1. Find the right footwear

Different shoes work for different people. Make sure you spend time trying on different styles and find something with good support and grip that suits you. We strongly recommend well-worn in waterproof hiking boots.



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, family and social life means that you might need to rework our training plans to make them fit around your lifestyle. 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.



6. Add variety to your training

Including cross-training such as cycling, running, swimming and gym work can quickly enhance your fitness, especially if you're struggling to fit in the much longer training walks.



7. Increase your strength

For this challenge you'll be on your feet for many hours, so building a strong core and having good posture will really help the kms feel easier and reduce the likelihood of injury.



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. Keep it social

One of the best things about walking is that it's an accessible and sociable activity. Invite family & friends along on your training walks to keep you company & motivated.



11. Check the weather

The changeable British weather is part of the excitement and challenge of walking. Check out your Kit List and make sure you're prepared and comfortable in all conditions. To check the weather forecast we recommend using <http://www.mwis.org.uk/>.

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 trekking or 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 for Mental Health UK feeling prepared and confident to achieve your goal.

1. Is this the right plan for me?

This 15-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.

15 WEEK TRAINING GUIDE

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Hilly hike	Rest	Cross training	Long hike
	Rest is vital to progression and adaptation. The yellow dot is a reminder to complete the stretches	30 x mins walk to include 3 x 5 min brisk effort & 2 mins easy recovery	On these days we recommend doing yoga or conditioning sessions.	10 mins steady walking + 8 x 90 secs brisk uphill efforts with easy walk back recovery + 10 mins steady walking.		Optional cross training (swim, run, bike, cross trainer, rowing) – easy 30 mins.	Easy walk 100 mins off road if possible.
2	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Hilly hike	Rest	Cross training	Long 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.		Optional cross training – easy 30 mins.	Easy 1 hour 45 mins off road if possible.
3	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Hilly hike	Rest	Cross training	Long hike
	Stretching well the day after your long 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.	Notice how you feel on your rest days, are there small changes you can make to improve your recovery?	Optional cross training – easy 30-40 mins.	Easy 2 hours off road if possible.
4	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Hilly hike	Rest	Cross training	Long hike
	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.		Optional cross training – easy 30-40 mins.	Easy 2 hours 20 - 2 hours 30 mins off road if possible.

5	Rest	Easy hike	Rest & core	Brisk hike	Rest	Cross training	Long 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.		Optional cross training – easy 30-40 mins.	Easy 1 hour 30 min - 1 hour 45 mins off road if possible.
6	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Hilly hike	Rest	Cross training	Long 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.		Optional cross training – easy 30-40 mins.	Easy 2 hour 45 mins - 3 hours off road.
7	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long 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.	Cross training 45-60 mins at an easy effort.		30-45 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.	Easy 3 hour 30 min hike off road.
8	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike
		50-60 mins walk to include 4 x 8 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery.		Cross training 45-60 mins at an easy effort.		40-50 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk using landmarks.	3 hours 45 mins - 4 hours mins off road.
9	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike

		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.		Cross training 45-60 mins at an easy effort.		40-50 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk using landmarks.	4 hours - 4 hours 15 mins walk with the final 60-90 mins to include brisk uphill efforts.
10	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Easy hike	Long 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.		Cross training 40 mins at an easy effort.		30-40 mins easy walk.	2 hours easy hike.
11	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike
	Now we are in our peak training weeks work to make sure your nutrition and snacking between meals is spot on!	50 mins 'out and back' walk – walk out for 25 minutes, turn and get back to the start 2-3 mins quicker over an undulating route.		Cross training 45-60 mins at an easy effort.		45-60 mins 'fartlek' walk using landmarks.	20-22km off road walk with 3 x 3km at a brisk effort over an undulating route.
12	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike
	Look back on all your positives to see how far you have come!	45-60 mins with the final 25 mins at a brisk effort over an undulating route.		Cross training 45-60 mins at an easy effort.		60 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk using landmarks.	22-25km off road walk to include 10km at a brisk effort over an undulating route with some sharp hills.
13	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike
		Progression walk of 30 mins easy, 30 mins brisk.		50 - 60 mins easy cross training.		60 mins hilly 'fartlek' walk using landmarks over a hilly route.	4-5 hour easy walk.

14	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Cross training	Rest	Fartlek hike	Long hike
	In the final two weeks you will see your training cut back a little to ensure you are feeling recovered for event day!	40 mins walk to include 4 x 5 mins brisk effort, 90 secs easy recovery.		30-40 mins easy cross training.		40 mins 'fartlek' walk using landmarks.	90-100 mins easy relaxed walk.
15	Rest	Brisk hike	Rest & core	Easy hike	Rest	THE MAY 50K	Rest
	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.		15-20 mins easy walk.		Good luck and enjoy the challenge!	Be proud of all you've achieved!

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.

CONDITIONING

These exercises are designed to strengthen specific muscle groups which will help you with your challenge. It's important to use just your own body weight in the early weeks. But in the latter weeks, you can add small weights to your ankles to help build strength. The idea of the conditioning is to complete each exercise then move on to the next. Once you've finished all the exercises, you can then repeat three to five times. You can also increase the number of repetitions for each exercise to 20, 30, 40 or 50, depending on how strong you feel. Don't forget to stretch before and after the session to keep the muscles loose and long.

Calf raises

Stand with your feet together, at arm's length away from the wall. Have your fingers just touching the wall for balance. Raise yourself slowly on to the tips of your toes and slowly lower. Repeat 20 times.

Squats

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, hands on hips. Keep your back straight and head up while you slowly lower yourself so that your knees are bent 90 degrees. Then stand up so that your knees are locked straight. Repeat 20 times.

Step ups

Using the bottom step of a staircase or a low bench, start with your left foot on the step and your right foot on the floor. Stand up straight on your left leg, bringing your right foot up to the step above and then lower back down to the floor. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

Leg extensions

Sit on a high sofa, bed or bench with the backs of your knees just on the edge and your feet hanging down. Lean back, with your hands behind you for support. Keeping the back of your knee on the seat, slowly lift your left foot up so that your leg becomes straight, and lower again. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

Leg raises

Lie on your stomach on a mat or soft floor with your hands under your chin. Keeping your left leg straight, slowly raise it six inches off the floor and then slowly lower. Repeat 20 times. Change leg and repeat.

Hamstrings

Stand with feet 1 metre apart. With legs straight and hands behind back slowly bend forward at the hips keeping back straight and head up. Should feel a slow pull in muscles at the back of legs. Hold for 10 secs, stand up and lean slightly backwards, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

Quads

Standing with feet together, bring left foot up and put left hand on lower shin by ankle and pull behind bottom. Keep back straight and head up. May need to balance with right hand on wall. Should feel slow pull-down front of leg. Hold for 10 secs, swap legs, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

Groin

Stand with feet 1 metre apart and both feet pointing forward. Keeping back straight and head up slowly lunge down to right side feeling pull on inside of left leg. Hold for 10 secs, swap legs, repeat 3 times. Should feel pull but no pain.

Hips

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and hands on hips. Keeping head still rotate hips round clockwise 10 times and anti-clockwise 10 times. Repeat three times.

Torso

Stand with feet shoulder width apart and hands on head. Keep feet pointing forward but twist body as far as is comfortable, hold for 1 second, face forward, twist body in other direction, hold for 1 second, face forward. Repeat 10 times.

Shoulder

Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Start with hands by hips and keeping arms straight slowly swing arms round backwards 10 times, change direction swinging arms forwards 10 times. Repeat 3 times.

Standing stretch

Stand with feet together. Place hands together and reach as high as you can, hold for 10 secs, relax. Repeat 3 times.

Please note, you should only stretch warmed up muscles. Don't stretch too far, all you should feel is a slow pull, never any pain. Never bounce, always stretch slowly. People with old injuries or back problems should be especially careful whilst exercising and stretching.

FOOD & DIET

What you eat when you start to train will impact on your walking and energy levels. Initially while the training is at a low weekly mileage it would be best to concentrate on eating in a regular pattern and trying to reduce your daily intake of saturated fats. This includes less fried foods and dairy products as these will counter any training you start to do.

As your mileage increases it would be worth trying to ensure that at least one meal a day is high in carbohydrate; this is the product that once stored in your system will give you energy. Carbohydrate is found mainly in the form of potatoes, bread, pasta and rice and so is easy to base any meal around. Combined with this increased intake of carbohydrate must also be a good mixture of vitamins and minerals found in fruit and vegetables. Fruit in particular is an ideal food for this challenge because it is high in fructose which provides energy as it is more easily absorbed from the stomach for use than other sugars (such as insulin obtained through eating chocolate). Bananas are usually the preferred energy provider when needing to maintain energy.

Fluids are another area in which you will have to increase your intake as you will start to lose more from your system by sweating and other exercise related matters. This is simply combated by drinking a lot more water. You can also increase your energy levels through the intake of isotonic drinks or concentrated fruit juices, some people find these work very well and the psychological effect by itself is often enough to make them worthwhile. If you intend to use these on the challenge it is a good idea to get your body used to them while training.

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!

TRAINING GUIDE NOTES

This programme is a rough training guide. Obviously with work, family and fundraising commitments you may not always be able to achieve what we have set out for you. However, in order to get close to achieving the training it is very important to organise your time properly. There are plenty of ways to ensure that you maximise your training, even if you feel you have no time outside work.

- Organise your week to make time to get out to do some training.
- Get up an hour earlier and go out for a quick walk, run or cycle with some stretching in the morning before work while it is still light.
- If you can walk to work, do so. If you get to work by public transport, get off a stop or two earlier than usual, so that you walk some distance each day. If you drive, park further away than usual, or walk a longer route to work.
- Use your lunchtimes to take regular brisk walks or a run around your work area, not just a stroll around the shops.
- Find a steep set of stairs i.e. five floors of a department store/office block and climb them five times, at least three times per week.
- Swimming, running, cycling, rowing and any other sport will also help get you prepared.
- Joining a leisure centre is a good idea as the local fitness instructors may well be able to design a programme specifically for you. Most good gyms have a walking machine, or even better a stair climber, where you can clock up mileage more safely and comfortably but do try to walk as much as possible in 'real' conditions and wearing your rucksack and boots.

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/>

