

# Physical Requirements

**NOTE: ALL Upper and Lower Canyon passengers MUST hike the Bright Angel Trail. Adequate preparation for this strenuous hike is essential.**

Upper and Lower Canyon trips with Hatch River Expeditions are specifically designed for guests who are willing and able to complete a long and difficult hike on the Bright Angel Trail. Upper Canyon passengers will be required to hike out of the Grand Canyon on the last day of their trip, and Lower Canyon passengers will be required to hike into the Grand Canyon on the first day of their trip. Even seasoned hikers find hiking in the Grand Canyon to be more challenging than they anticipated.

To safely participate in the Bright Angel Trail hike, you'll need to prepare for:

- A full day's hike – Most hikers take 4-5 hours to get down the trail and 7-8 hours to get up it. Those times will be significantly impacted by pre-trip preparation and self-care while on the trail.
- A long, steep trail – The Bright Angel Trail is 9.3 miles long with an elevation change of approximately 4,300 feet (about 3.5 times the height of the Empire State Building)
- Temperatures that may exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Uneven, rocky, and sandy terrain with steep steps up and down and occasionally narrow pathways
- Carrying personal gear – Many guests choose to use our UPS duffel service to lighten their loads. Remember that no matter what, you should be carrying at least 3 liters of water and any gear you want access to on the trail.

**Note:** We are happy to discuss other styles of trips that allow us to accommodate a wide range of physical challenges and medical conditions. Please contact our office so we can assist you personally with any concerns.

## Pre-Trip Conditioning

Preparing in advance for the desert terrain can enhance your enjoyment as well as your ability to see some of the hidden gems the Canyon has to offer. Hiking trails are not maintained and include elevation gain, rocky terrain and even stream crossings. It's worth it to see that spectacular waterfall or phenomenal slot canyon. Remember that the Bright Angel Trail hike is strenuous and mandatory. All other hikes on your trip are optional.

Conditioning before your trip will also aid in the camping experience. Most campsites are either sandy beaches or rocky ledges. Guest are responsible for carrying their own gear as well as setting up camp so being physically fit will enhance this experience tremendously.

Review our **12 Tips for a Better Hike** on the reverse of this page before your trip.

### 3 Steps to Condition for Your Hike

Step up your conditioning routine over time.

**STEP 1:** Start a few months in advance by using the incline feature on your treadmill, taking the stairs wherever you go, and walking every day.

**STEP 2:** Find and hike local trails with rocky terrain and elevation gain/loss to simulate Grand Canyon conditions. Start doing hikes that are 2-3 miles long a few times a week. Work your way up as the trip gets closer.

**STEP 3:** Between 1 month and 2 weeks before your trip, practice walking longer distances—you should be able to go 6-9 miles comfortably by this time.

#### DON'T FORGET TO:

- purchase your hiking shoes and sandals ahead of time so you can break them in and avoid blisters
- get in the habit of drinking water throughout the day NOW – it's good for you every day, but mandatory on the trail!

# Hiking in the Grand Canyon

Everyone who hikes in the canyon for the first time reports that it was more difficult than they expected. There are no easy trails into or out of the Grand Canyon.

Hiking in the Grand Canyon is a strenuous and potentially dangerous activity suitable for only those in excellent physical condition. If you have any history of ankle, knee, hip or other joint problems, asthma or heart-related problems, or have recently undergone surgery, please consult your physician before attempting to hike into or out of the Canyon. Temperatures typically exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) in the summer months.

Additionally, given that this is a group activity, it is important that you are physically able to participate with the group and be on time. Remember that your actions can affect the group experience.

## PHYSICAL TRAINING BEFORE YOUR TRIP IS ESSENTIAL.

### 12 Tips for a Better Hike

**1. EAT SALTY SNACKS** almost as often as you drink. Balance your food intake with your fluid consumption so that your electrolyte levels stay within a normal range.

**2. DRINK AT LEAST THREE QUARTS** of water and electrolytes. Do not wait until you feel thirsty—by that time, you are already dehydrated. Camelback-style hydration packs work great with two backup water bottles. Note that bottled water in individual disposable containers is not sold in the park. You must bring refillable bottles with you.

**3. REST** at every opportunity. Three developed shade areas are located on your hike into or out of the Canyon.

**4. WEAR** a **WIDE-BRIMMED HAT** and other skin-covering clothing for sun protection.

**5. WET** your hat, bandana and long-sleeved shirt at water stations.

**6. PACK LIGHT.** Take only what you need – and then double check it. Water and food should be your heaviest items. Consider using Hatch's UPS Duffel Service (info on the [Duffel Service Form](#)).

**7. PACE YOURSELF.** A steady pace will not only prevent you from tiring too quickly, but will allow you to enjoy the scenery.

**8. RESEARCH** your trip. A Grand Canyon hike is not suitable for everybody. Make sure you read the summer hiking information on the Grand Canyon National Park's website.

<http://www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/hike-smart.htm>

**9. PREPARE** for your hike by getting a good night's rest, eating a good dinner, and avoiding alcohol and other diuretics.

**10. PRE-HYDRATE** during your trip by drinking lots of **WATER.** Don't get behind!

**11. WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES** and clip your toenails to avoid "black toe" and blisters.

**12. STRETCH** before you start, but prepare to have **SORE MUSCLES** the day after your adventure.

#### **Bonus Tip: Mules have the right of way**

If you encounter a mule train in the Grand Canyon, make sure to follow these safety tips:

- Step off the trail on the uphill side away from the edge.
- Follow the directions of the wrangler. Remain completely quiet and stand perfectly still.
- Do not return to the trail until the last mule is 50 feet (15 meters) past your position.