

"TIME START TRAINING FOR YOUR HIKES"

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Balance Exercises for Hiking

The exercises listed below are designed to strengthen your legs and ankles and improve balance and proprioception (your body's ability to know its position in space and react with proper movement). On the trail, this can result in better agility and coordination when you're stepping over logs, landing on uneven surfaces, or reacting to a sudden slip.

Some of these exercises incorporate a soft surface to simulate a trail, which can increase the difficulty and make your stabilizing muscles work harder. A soft surface can be anything from a yoga mat to a sandy beach. As with the strength-training exercises, see our sample training schedule for information on how to integrate balance exercise into a three-month workout routine.

Standing single-leg balance: Stand upright with your feet together on a solid, level surface, then lift one foot about six to 12 inches off the ground. Keep your hips level and hold for 30 seconds then switch legs and repeat. For more challenge, stand on a soft surface or the squishy side of a BOSU® balance trainer. This can be difficult at first, so if you need to extend your arms to improve your balance, do so.



Step back to balance: Start by standing upright with your feet together and take one big step backward. Keep your torso upright and use your core muscles to slowly and steadily bring your other foot back to match the first one while maintaining your balance. Now step back with the other foot. Repeat for 30 seconds. As you improve, you can add more challenge by doing this exercise on a soft surface, such as grass or sand.

Jump squats: Start with your feet shoulder-width apart and then squat down until your thighs are at least parallel with the ground. Focus on keeping your chest up, your feet flat and your knees over your toes. As you come up from the squat, push through heels and explode up and jump a few inches off the ground. When you land, do so softly and immediately go into another squat. Repeat for 30 seconds.

Jump down to a soft surface: Find a set of stairs and place a yoga mat at the bottom to create a soft surface. Then stand on the second or third step and jump off, landing on the mat in a soft, controlled manner with both feet at the same time. Let your knees flex to absorb the landing. Return to the starting position and jump again. Repeat for 30 seconds.





Lunge off step: Stand on a step and lunge forward off the step with one leg as you drop the knee of the other leg toward the ground until both knees are bent at about a 90-degree angle. Keep your front knee directly above your ankle. Now reverse the motion to return to the starting position. As you do so, push up through the heel of your front foot to engage your glutes. From the starting position, lunge forward with your other leg. Repeat for 30 seconds

Recommended Warm-Ups

Before you do any of these exercises, you're going to want to warm up your leg muscles. I recommend doing 30 minutes of a leg intensive cardio including running, a stair master or stair mill, or a rowing machine.

Frequency and Repetition

The 10 exercises listed here are challenging and it will take you a while to be able to do them all in one gym workout. Start out by learning the movements and gradually built up the number of exercises you do from this list when you visit the gym. There's really no need to go heavy with weights and I'd focus more on increasing the number of sets and repetitions you do per workout instead. Legs recover fairly quickly from a functional workouts like this and you can build up to two workouts per week. Remember, focus on the movements, balance, and stabilization and you'll see a big payoff in terms of hiking endurance and coordination next spring.

3 Month Out Training Program For Hiking Trips:

Month 1:

Monday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Restorative Day - Yoga

Tuesday –

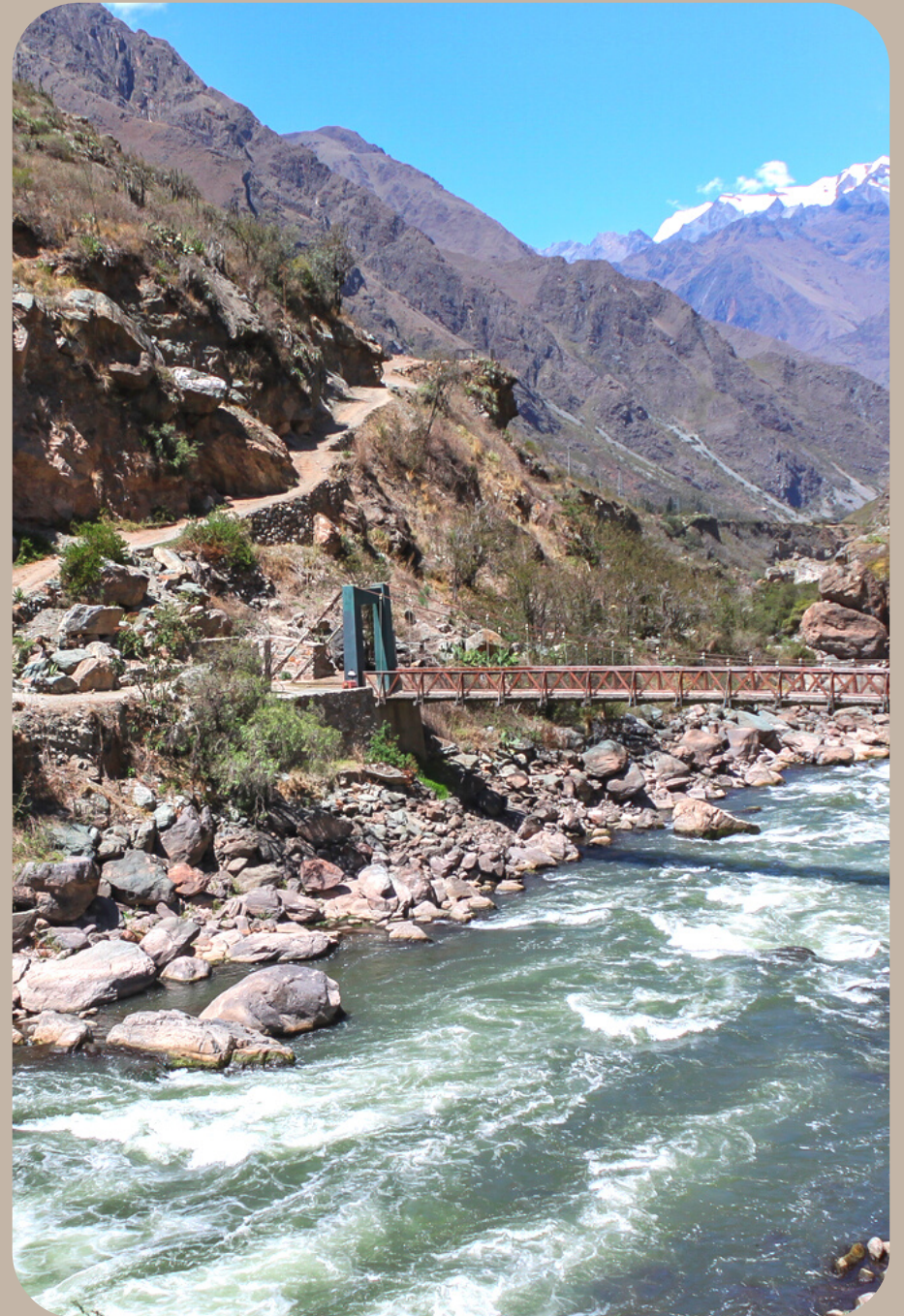
30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Active Warm-Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch

10 mins Cardio

Strength Training (3 sets 8-12 Reps OR 3 sets 30 Secs Each) Goblet Squats, Mountain Climbers, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)





Wednesday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Active Warm Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch
45 mins Cardio

Thursday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Strength Training (3 sets 8-12 Reps OR 3 sets 30 Secs Each) Single Leg Raised Split Squat, Mountain Climbers, Single Leg RDL, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks
Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Friday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

45 mins Cardio

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Saturday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Strength Training (3 sets 8-12 Reps OR 3 sets 30 Secs Each)

Goblet Squats, Mountain Climbers, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)

Sunday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Long Hike or Walk: If possible try to find hilly terrain with a dirt path. If that's not possible add at least 1 day/month logging miles on a stair climber or inclined treadmill. Want to step it up a notch, carry a weighted pack.
3 Minute Warm-Up: Dynamic Stretching (Worlds Greatest, Knees to Chest, Butt Kicks)

Week 1: 6 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 2: 7 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 3: 8 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 4: 5 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)





MONTH 2:

Monday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Restorative Day - Yoga

Tuesday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Active Warm-Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch

10 mins Cardio

Strength Training (4 sets 8 - 12 Reps OR 45 Secs Each)

Goblet Squats, Mountain Climbers, Single-Leg - Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Side Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)

Wednesday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Active Warm-Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch

60 mins Cardio (Hiking)

Thursday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings)

Strength Training (4 sets 8 -12 Reps OR 45 Secs Each)
Single Leg Raised Split Squat, Mountain Climbers,
Single Leg RDL, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks
Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Friday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

45 mins Cardio

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Saturday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Strength Training (4 sets 8 -12 Reps OR 45 Secs Each)

Goblet Squats, Mountain Climbers, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs,
Forearm Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)





Sunday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings, & glutes)

Long Hike or Walk: If possible try to find hilly terrain with a dirt path. If that's not possible add at least 1 day/month logging miles on a stair climber or inclined treadmill. Want to step it up a notch, carry a weighted pack.

3 Minute Warm Up: Dynamic Stretching (Worlds Greatest, Knees to Chest, Butt Kicks)

Week 1: 7 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 2: 8 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 3: 9 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 4: 5 miles (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

MONTH 3:

Monday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Restorative Day - Yoga

Tuesday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Active Warm-Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch

15 mins Cardio

Strength Training (4 sets 8 -12 Reps OR 45 Secs Each) Jump Downs - soft landing, Mountain Climbers feet on sliders, Single-Leg - Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Side Planks
Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)

Wednesday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Active Warm-Up - Worlds Greatest Stretch

90 mins Cardio (Hiking)





Thursday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings)

Strength Training (4 sets 8 -12 Reps OR 45 Secs Each) Single Leg Raised Split Squat, Mountain Climbers feet on sliders, Single Leg RDL, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Friday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

90 mins Cardio

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis Lower Body)

Saturday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Strength Training (4 sets 8 -12 Reps OR 60 Secs Each) Jump Down - soft landing, Mountain Climbers, Hip Bridges, Bird Dogs, Forearm Planks

Stretching/Foam Rolling (Emphasis on lower body)

Sunday –

30 mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Morning and 30mins Self Care & Single Leg Balancing Exercises in Evening - (lacrosse ball - feet, calves, hamstrings,& glutes)

Long Hike or Walk: If possible try to find hilly terrain with a dirt path. If that's not possible add at least 1 day/month logging miles on a stair climber or inclined treadmill. Want to step it up a notch, carry a weighted pack.

3 Minute Warm-Up: Dynamic Stretching (Worlds Greatest, Knees to Chest, Butt Kicks)

Week 1: 8 miles w/ weighted pack (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 2: 9 miles w/ weighted pack (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 3: 10miles w/ weighted pack (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

Week 4: 6 miles w/ weighted pack (8 -10 Minute Cool Down)

