Essential Exercises (From Backpacker.com)

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Essential Exercises

5 easy ways to get strong and avoid injuries A good set of lungs goes a long way in the backcountry, but aerobic training is only half the battle. Reebok Master Trainer Petra Kolber recommends a regular at-home maintenance program to keep key muscle groups tuned up. Do these five exercises two or three times a week.

Toe lift Target: Shins

If you're planning a trip with plenty of descending, this exercise will help protect your shins from the pounding. Sit in a chair with your knees bent at 90 degrees and your hands resting on your thighs. Place your right heel on top of your left foot. Lift the front of your left foot, bending at the ankle and keeping your heel on the floor, while pressing down with your right heel to add as much resistance as you need. Pause and return to the starting position. Repeat eight to 12 times, then switch legs. Build up to three sets.

Calf raise Target: Calves

This exercise will strengthen your calves to avoid strains and add power for the steeps. Stand facing a wall, with your feet hip-distance apart, and gently rest both of your hands on the wall for support. Press up onto the balls of your feet. Pause and return to starting position. Repeat eight to 12 times. Build up to three sets.

Plank Target: Core strength and shoulder stability

Your core keeps you upright on the trail and controls the weight of your pack. Working it will ward off fatigue and prevent injuries to other muscles you rely on when your core gets tired. Lie on your stomach with your abdominal muscles pulled in tight. Prop yourself up on your elbows. Keeping your back straight, push up with your forearms and toes. Hold for three to five breaths and lower. Repeat eight to 12 times. Build up to three sets.

Wall squat Target: Glutes and hamstrings

Develop strong glutes and hamstrings, and you'll be far less sore after a day of descending. Stand with your back to a wall, arms down by your sides. Walk your feet out 6 to 8 inches in front of you and put your feet together. Slowly slide down the wall until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Pause, and then push up to the starting position. Repeat eight to 12 times. Build up to three sets.

Quadricep lift Target: Quads

To power up hills, you need killer quads. Thank us after your next set of switchbacks. Sit upright on the floor and extend your right leg out in front of you, placing a folded towel under your knee. Bend your left knee and keep your left foot flat on the ground. Place your hands palm-down on the floor behind you. Contract your right thigh and lift your right heel off the floor. Hold for three to five breaths and lower to the starting position. Repeat eight to 12 times and switch legs. Build up to

three sets.