

# Prepare to Hike (From Scouting Magazine)

You'll have a better outing if your body's not aching.

By Jeff Csatari

Photographs by Dan Bryant

Model: Juan Castillo

Remember the last time you went hiking without training your body first? OK, perhaps the trauma permanently erased the pain from your memory. So let me jog it a bit: You couldn't catch your breath. You thought your pounding heart might burst through your ribcage. Your lower back felt as if you had been sleeping on acorns. Knees screamed, hams burned, calves begged for mercy. And that was just during the walk from camp to the trailhead.

Don't let it happen again. If you have hikes planned with your pack, troop, or crew, there's still time to prepare your body so that you can enjoy yourself in the outdoors. "There's no better way to get fit for hiking than by hiking," says Jonathan Dorn, editor-in-chief of *Backpacker* magazine. "If you don't have trails nearby, hit the stadium stairs or the StairMaster. Wear your boots and a pack; the gym rats might snicker, but you need to get your feet and shoulders engaged, too."

Throw on your boots and a pack loaded with 15 pounds of weight and go for warm-up walks at least twice a week, at least four weeks in advance of your trip.

Or if you're planning to attend July's jamboree, you really need to shape up. Expect to walk upward of 10 miles a day in hot, humid weather on Fort A.P. Hill's dusty grounds.

Brisk daily walking is the best way to prepare for jambo jaunting. But you should also work the following balancing and strengthening exercises into your pre-hike preparation.

*Jeff Csatari is a contributing editor of Men's Health. His new book is Your Best Body at 40+ (Rodale, [yourbestbodyat40.com](http://yourbestbodyat40.com)).*

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## SHOULDER SHRUG

**Works the trapezius muscle of the upper back**

1. Stand straight while holding a dumbbell in each hand (palms facing your legs) and arms extended at your sides.
2. Lift the dumbbells by elevating your shoulders as high as possible toward your ears. Pause in the up position for a second and then slowly lower the weights.

Do two sets of 10 repetitions. Gradually work up to three sets of 10. Over time, use heavier dumbbells.





## WAITER'S BOW

Loosens the lower back and hamstrings

1. Hold a golf club, broomstick, or pole against your back vertically with one hand on top and the other on the bottom.
2. With feet spread hip-width apart, bend your knees slightly and then bend forward at the hips being sure to keep the pole touching your head, back, and butt. When you feel the pole start to lift off your butt, stop and hold that stretch for 20 seconds.

Return to the standing position and repeat the stretch twice more.



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## MONSTER WALK

the muscles on the  
the body

1. Wrap a tight resistance
2. Spread your feet to  
your knees slightly.  
toes pointed straight

Make 10 steps to the



Strengthens butt muscles  
outside of the hip that move

band around both legs, just  
shoulder-width apart to  
Now, step sideways across  
ahead or slightly inward.  
right, 10 to the left, and



and hip abductors,  
the leg away from

above the ankles.  
stretch the band. Bend  
the room with your  
repeat three times.

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## HIGH STEP-UP WITH WEIGHT

Works all leg muscles

1. Face a sturdy box, step, or chair that is about knee high. With your feet hip-width apart, hold a 10-pound weight in front of your chest.

2. Keeping your back straight (don't bend forward) and eyes forward, step onto the box with your left foot and push through your heel to straighten your leg. Keep your right foot hanging free. Step down and then step onto the box with your right foot.

Alternate this way for five reps on each leg. Rest and do another set. Each week, add three reps and another set until you can do 14 with each leg per set and five sets.



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## WOOD CHOP

Works the lats and core muscles, especially the obliques

1. Stand with feet spread shoulder-width apart and knees bent slightly. Hold a lightweight dumbbell (or a basketball) in both hands over your left shoulder next to your ear.

2. Bending at the waist, sweep the weight down and across your body—in a chopping motion—until it reaches the outside of your lower right leg. Reverse the move. Be sure to chop slowly and in control.

Do 10 chops to the right and then repeat the move starting with the weight above your right shoulder and chopping to your left. Do a second set of 10 on each side. Work up to three sets of 20 on each side. In a few weeks, replace the dumbbell with a heavier weight or replace the basketball with a medicine ball.



## **FOOT WORK**

### **3 exercises to keep your dogs happy**

To reduce risk of ankle sprains, aching arches, and Achilles tendonitis, perform these exercises two to three times weekly:

**Towel Pull:** Place a thin bath towel on the floor with a telephone book on one end. Sit in a chair with bare feet. Plant one heel on the end of the towel and draw the weighted end toward you by curling your toes. Then repeat the exercise using your other foot. Do five with each foot.

**Marble Grab:** Place five marbles and a cup on the floor. With a bare foot, pick up one marble at a time with your toes and place it in the cup. Dump out the marbles and repeat using the other foot. Do five sets.

**Achilles Tendon Stretch:** Stand on a stairstep on the balls of your feet with your heels hanging off. Grasp the railing for balance. Slowly let your heels drop down over the edge of the step as you relax your calf muscles. Hold the stretch for 15 seconds and then bring your heels back up to the level of the step, and repeat four times.