

## A Fitness Reminder for Wavus Long Hikers and Paddlers, AT Sea, Allagash, St. Croix River, 100 Mile Wilderness Trippers and Long Voyage

As you look forward to your summer wilderness trip experience, please be aware that canoeing and hiking are strenuous activities that can be made easier, and perhaps more enjoyable, by doing some pre-trip fitness.

### Fitness Training Plan

To alleviate some of the physical challenge that these activities provide, we suggest that you make an effort to do some fitness training before arriving at camp. To help prepare, we recommend that you work on your aerobic endurance, cardiopulmonary fitness and hiking/walking strength before you arrive at Wavus, particularly if you are not already exercising regularly.

The ideal is to go for fast paced hikes on trails carrying a daypack (with lots of water!) 2-3 times per week for 30-45 minutes. If trails are unavailable near your home, use a combination of roads and athletic fields. This is also an excellent way to break in your hiking boots! We recommend you complement your hiking/walking work-outs with either jogging, biking, or other cross-training 1-2 times per week in order to prepare yourself adequately.

Any rhythmic and continuous activity (swimming, cycling, running, and hiking) will increase aerobic endurance; however, it is often a good idea to exercise specifically for what you are training. For example, backpacking is a weight bearing activity and thus you may want to concentrate on activities that are higher impact such as running and walking. These activities will increase bone strength as well as muscle strength. It takes about 20 to 60 minutes of aerobic activity to increase your cardiovascular endurance - which should lead to the ability to walk faster more comfortably and not end up with such sore legs.

Resistive exercises such as leg press, squats, leg curl, calf raise, leg extension, push-ups, and crunches will help strengthen muscles, tendons, and bones, which can reduce risk of injury and help you to feel less fatigued while backpacking and hiking. Try 12-15 reps for three sets one to two times a week, using a weight that makes the exercise difficult toward your last set. There is no need to try to become bulky with muscle mass (as it will just add weight to what you carry uphill), but exercising pre-trip should add to your energy level and ability to hike or canoe day after day.

Our expectations of physical fitness are not intended to scare you. We simply want you to know that a little physical training before your arrival will greatly increase your enjoyment of your wilderness trip experience. It is much easier to enjoy the view or study the map carefully if you are not gasping for breath.

Have fun, and we look forward to spending part of your summer with you.

### Tips for Clothing and Boots

#### The Art of Layering

Having the proper clothing on any wilderness trip experience is the key to your comfort. By using the "layering" principle, you will be comfortable in a wide variety of conditions. The secret to this approach is to wear just the right amount of insulation to match your workload. Insulation comes from trapped air in the fabric fibers and between each layer. The recommended fabrics will keep their loft when wet and, therefore, keep you warm. *Cotton will not keep you warm.* The following is the best system for your layering technique:

1. The inner layer should be something thin and light such as a T-shirt or long underwear made of a synthetic fabric such as polypropylene or capilene. These fabrics are effective at wicking moisture away from the skin. Cotton T-shirts are cool when hiking but cold when wet. If you perspire heavily as you hike, it will be to your benefit to have a dry layer to put on when you stop.

2. The next layer is the insulation layer for warmth on the higher peaks and ridges and for lower temperatures. Sweaters, shirts, pullovers, tights and pants made of polar fleece, polypropylene, capilene or wool are the most effective insulators.
3. The outer layer protects the other layers and yourself from the wind and rain. This layer includes windshirt, windpants, and/or rain gear. A synthetic shell of nylon or Gore-tex works well. Gore-tex is expensive but highly wind and waterproof while still being somewhat breathable. It is highly recommended.

### **Shopping Tips**

Consistent with the idea of "simple in means, rich in ends," we encourage campers not to spend a lot of money on new equipment. One could easily spend thousands of dollars, shopping blindly for all of the equipment desired. Here are some tips on how to shop frugally.

It is worth spending an afternoon exploring yard sales, your local thrift shops, friends & relatives, and Army/Navy surplus stores for bargains. For example, loose fitting wool pants are an excellent substitute for the more expensive fleece pants a retail store can offer. There are plenty of other used items to look for such as wool sweaters, gloves, and hats. B all means, bring things you already own

In addition to the above suggestions, there are plenty of retail stores & websites that offer good deals. There are many good stores out there. L.L. Bean carries everything that you will need ([www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com)). Both REI and EMS can also supply this equipment, along with many general outdoor stores. If you prefer to try things on in a store and then order on-line, [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com), [www.reioutlet.com](http://www.reioutlet.com), and [www.sierratradingpost.com](http://www.sierratradingpost.com) are great resources.

Note: When ordering from the catalogs and having them directly sent to camp, it is a good idea have them permanently mark your items with your daughter's name so that they might be identified and returned at the end of camp.

<b>Campmor</b>	<b>800-230-2151</b>	<b><a href="http://www.campmor.com">www.campmor.com</a></b> This mail-order company carries a large selection of discounted items from many different companies.
<b>EMS</b>	<b>888-463-6367</b>	<b><a href="http://www.ems.com">www.ems.com</a></b> There are many EMS stores around the country, especially on the east coast.
<b>LL Bean</b>	<b>800-837-4288</b>	<b><a href="http://www.llbean.com">www.llbean.com</a></b> They offer a mail-order service and an excellent return/exchange policy. LL Bean® brand gear is generally very high quality, especially for the price.
<b>REI</b>	<b>800-246-4840</b>	<b><a href="http://www.rei.com">www.rei.com</a></b> You can find REI stores around the country, or use their mail order services. They have a wide selection of reliable clothing and equipment and have an excellent return/exchange policy.
<b>Sierra Trading Post</b>	<b>800-713-4534</b>	<b><a href="http://www.sierratradingpost.com">www.sierratradingpost.com</a></b> They offer discounts on factory seconds, closeouts, and overstocked items from many companies. This is a great catalog to double check before paying more elsewhere.
<b>Amerasport</b>	<b>800-786-9402</b>	<b><a href="http://www.amerasport.com">www.amerasport.com</a></b> They have opened a retail store near suburban Boston. Just 12 minutes from Downtown Wellesley in Holliston on the Dover/Sherborn line. Call toll-free 800- 786-9402 or 508-429-9000 to schedule an appointment. The hours are 9-6 Monday - Friday and Saturdays by appointment.

## **Boot Fitting Information**

**For long hikers, your hiking boots may be the most important piece of equipment you will buy.**

These should be purchased **NOW!**

This will allow you to break them in on weekend hikes and around the house.

You can avoid many foot problems (blisters, cold feet, etc) by purchasing properly fitted boots. Please take extra time and care when buying your boots. Our information on boot fitting is relatively universal.

## **What to Buy**

You should purchase a sturdy, off-trail, **backpacking** boot, not a mountaineering boot. They should be a medium to heavyweight, ankle-high boot that provides good support for off-trail hiking and are suitable to carry 40-50 pound loads in a variety of on and off trail conditions.

Please fit your boots for **2 pairs of heavy wool socks** (not a liner sock and heavy sock, although 2 pairs of Smartwool (or similar) socks will be fine). This is very important because we may hike in a variety of environments and weather conditions. You will want the extra cushioning and warmth that two pairs of wool socks provide. In addition, on extended backpacking trips, feet tend to swell slightly, so larger boots provide more flexibility.

We recommend the following boot manufacturers: Asolo, Merrell, Scarpa, Salomon, Technica and Vasque. Some models that fit this description are L.L. Bean's Cresta Hikers or Knife Edge Hikers. If you find different boots of comparable quality and construction, they may be fine.

## **Tips for Fitting Your Boots**

1. Shop for boots in the afternoon because your feet swell during the day.
2. Boots that are too small will cause more problems than boots that are too large. Do not get boots that are too small as feet swell during a day of hiking.
3. Boots should fit comfortably with two pairs of heavy wool socks. Many people prefer two pairs of wool socks because it is warmer, provides more cushioning, and reduces the chance of blisters. Please do not let the salesperson talk you into a different sock arrangement. In our experience, many campers who have had foot problems bought boots that were fitted with one pair of wool socks and a very thin liner sock.
4. Start with a boot that is 1½ sizes larger than your normal shoe size. Again, it is much better to have boots that are a little too big, than boots that are too small.
5. Most likely, the boot that fits you best will feel a little large and look huge. When you walk around the store, your heel should lift up slightly, but not be too sloppy. Your toes should have enough room to wiggle.
6. Once you have found a pair of boots that feel comfortable walking around the store, test them for a proper fit. You do not want your toes to jam the front of your boot when walking downhill. To test this in a store, lace the boots (snug but not tight) and then kick your foot against the wall. Your toes should just nudge the front of the boot on the 3<sup>rd</sup> kick. If your toes hit on the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> kick, the boots are too small.
7. You should be able to slide your fingers between your heel and the back of the boot.
8. Finding the proper fit takes time. Please be patient. It is worth it to try on lots of different boots because different brands and models fit differently. Their internal shapes vary. Also, do not forget to try a size larger.
9. Remember, going big is better.... As they are broken in, leather boots will actually shrink over the years.

10. Be aware that replacement insoles such as "Super Feet" can change the way a boot fits by raising the height of your heel in the boot. If you have foot problems or concerns, see a podiatrist to be accurately diagnosed and properly treated. If you do have or use off the shelf insoles such as "Super Feet", please bring the original insoles to your boots with you to Wavus.

### **New Boots**

Once you have a new pair of boots, there are a few things you should do.

- First, waterproof them by putting several coats of SnoSeal® or Nikwax® on them.
- Then please take time to break in your new boots by walking or hiking in them before coming to Wavus (see the fitness training plan). Taking the time now will save you pain and troubles later!