



Sharpe's March

Training Advice Some General Pointers



There are, as you know, three points of entry for Sharpe's March. You can either join us on the final day, day three, and march 10 miles from Goring to Reading. Or, you can join us on day two and march a total of 25 miles from Wantage to Reading. Or, if you're really seeking to challenge yourself you can join us from the beginning at day one and march a total of 50 miles over the three days from Marlborough to Reading.. Whichever you choose, you will need to prepare your body for what you expect it to undertake. What follows is some advice on how you can begin to prepare yourself for Sharpe's March.

Remember, before starting any training program you should consult your Doctor!

Benefits of Walking

Walking improves circulation and breathing, it also strengthens your heart, thus reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. It's a great way to strengthen bones and tone your muscles, and also, it's great to burn off those calories and help you manage your weight.

Techniques

Your shoulders should be level – pulled back and down - remember to lift your chest. Always walk with your head up and eyes focused ahead. Your heel should touch the ground first, then follow through the arch of your foot onto your toes. Your toes will help you push off to another step thus reducing the risk of shin splints and tendon pulls. Your arms should be pumped forward and back, not side to side. Your cardiovascular workout should improve the faster you walk. You should try to keep an even stride, and a steady pace should be maintained. Avoid leaning forward or arching your back, as this could lead to lower back pain.

Your Boots/Shoes

These will definitely be your best friend throughout the March, so make sure that they are comfortable. Reasonably high ankles are desirable and a stiff heel counter will give you lateral support. It is always worth investing in a good pair of trekking or hiking boots and the appropriate socks. However, if buying new shoes, these should be well worn in. You could wear them around the house, on the way to work, and even do your shopping in them! You will find, once they have conformed to the shape of your feet, you are much less likely to get blisters.

Taking care of your feet

Blisters can be avoided by keeping your feet dry and wearing socks made out of fibres which draw moisture away from the skin – cotton is not good for this. Your shoes should not be laced too tightly OR too loosely as the irritation of rubbing and pinching may cause blisters. The arches of your feet may ache whilst you walk- this is from pounding on the floor. To avoid this, ensure you touch the ground heel first and follow through to your toes. Arch supports may help. To avoid blackened toe nails – caused from your big toe hitting the front of your shoe – try to keep your toe nails neatly trimmed.





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Training Advice

A 10 Week Training Program



The following training advice covers all three phases of the march. The further you are going to walk the more training you should consider. If you are joining us on day three (10 miles), you only need to think about the black text. For those of you joining us on days two and three (25 miles) you should also think about the text in green. For those of you completing the whole march from day one (50 miles) you should attempt the whole program (black, green and blue text).

Always warm up and stretch properly before and exercise and cool down and stretch again afterwards (see 'stretch program' on page 3). Where possible, do try to keep up with your normal exercise regime... be it sport, swimming, a gym session or two during the week. But, don't over work yourself. If you are struggling then slow things down a little, take it easy and pace yourself. It's not a race - we'll all be crossing the finish line together.

10 weeks before March

30 mins walk (1 mile)

Rest day

30 mins walk (1 mile)

Rest day

2 hour walk (4 miles)

5 weeks before March

1 hour walk (3 miles)

Rest day

1 hour walk (3 miles)

Rest day

6 hour walk (12 miles)

9 weeks before March

30 mins walk (1 mile)

Rest day

30 mins walk (1 mile)

Rest day

3 hour walk (6 miles)

3 & 4 weeks before March

1 hour walk (3 miles in kit)

Rest day

1 hour walk (3 miles)

Rest day

7 hour walk (14 miles)

8 weeks before March

1 hour walk (2 miles)

Rest day

1 hour walk (2 miles)

Rest day

4 hour walk (8 miles)

2 weeks before March

1 hour walk (3 miles in kit)

Rest day

1 hour walk (3 miles)

Rest day

2x 8 hour walk (16 miles)

6 & 7 weeks before March

1 hour walk (2 miles)

Rest day

5 hour walk (10 miles)

Rest day

1 hour walk (2 miles)

1 week before March

1 hour walk (3 miles in kit)

Rest day

1 hour walk (3 miles)

Rest day

2x 8 hour walk (16 miles)





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Stretch Program



Stretching is a really important part of any exercise for lots of reasons. Done correctly it will decrease muscle tension helping you to avoid pain and soreness after exercise. Here are some stretches that you could use...

Hamstrings – Lie on your back, bending one leg and keeping that foot on the floor to prevent you from lifting your buttocks during the stretch. Raise your other leg, holding it either side of your knee joint, and gradually pull the leg towards you. You should feel the hamstring muscle stretching at the back of this leg. Concentrate on keeping your buttocks on the floor, and keep the stretched leg as straight as possible. Repeat with other leg.

Calfs – Standing one foot in front of the other, feet comfortably apart, both feet facing forward, front leg bent, (knee over ankle joint) back leg straight, back straight. Press the heel of the back leg into the floor until a stretch is felt in the calf muscle in the back of the lower leg. If you don't feel it stretch, slide the heel slowly backwards keeping the foot on the floor.

Groin – Stand with feet 1 metre apart, both pointing forward. Keeping your back straight and head up, slowly lunge down to right side feeling the pull on the inside of your left leg. Hold for 10 seconds, swap legs, repeat three times.

Quads – Stand and using a chair or wall for support, grab one leg at the ankle, and slowly pull your heel up towards your bottom, whilst slowly applying a stretch on the quadricep muscles (large muscles at the front of the upper leg). Aim to keep your knees together and back straight throughout the stretch. Push your hips forward to increase the stretch.

Hips – Feet should be shoulder width apart and your hands on your hips. Keeping your head still, rotate hips as far as they will comfortably go, clockwise. Repeat 10 times. Repeat exercise anti-clockwise.

Torso – Feet shoulder width apart with hands on head. Keep your feet pointing forward but twist your body as far as it will comfortably go, hold for 1 sec, face forward and then repeat twisting in the opposite direction. Repeat three times.

Shoulders – Hold left arm with right arm at elbow. Bring left arm across the body and hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with other arm.

N.B. You should only stretch warmed up muscles. Don't stretch too far, remember, you should only feel a slight pull, never any pain. Always stretch slowly. People with bad backs or any old injuries should be very careful when stretching and exercising.





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Training Program Notes



This 10 week training program is only a rough guide. With your work, fundraising and family commitments, you may not be able to achieve the whole program. However, in order to successfully train for the March, you will need to organise your time properly. There are plenty of ways to maximise your training, even if you feel you have no spare time:

- Get up an hour early to go for a brisk walk before work, or walk to work if you can.
- If you do drive to work, park your car further away than normal.
- Use your lunchtimes to take a walk.
- Always use stairs instead of lifts / escalators.
- Try and get your family involved – take days out that involve exercise.

It's always a good idea to train wearing the boots you will be wearing on the march. It is also essential that you start to train in the full kit for at least the shorter training sessions 4 weeks before the march as this will allow you make any alterations you need to get things as comfortable as possible. You may look a bit silly, but it will be well worth it!

It's always a good idea to join a gym or leisure centre. You will have access to fitness instructors who will design a program specifically for you.

Remember, you may not stick to the whole guide, but it is **vital** that you train.

You will enjoy the march far more if you are physically fit!!

