



Fresh off the plane from my latest adventure and like all good travellers the wheels were already in motion for my next trip. Having just been inspired by the breathtaking scenery of New Zealand's South Island, I knew it was time to take the step (well, many of them) and go see *'the beast'*, Mount Everest.

In search of some advice and thoughts on what it may be like trekking to Everest Base Camp, I contacted my cousin, Lauren, who had spent time around the Annapurna Circuit while in Nepal and before I knew it we had decided to team up and plan the trip together.

Now, trekking to Base Camp is not a decision to be taken lightly. After further reading and research into what was required, we quickly realised this wasn't going to be a luxurious holiday. However, the draw to see and experience one of the world's natural wonders overrode any hesitation, but we knew we'd have to be in good shape to make the most of the journey.



Our destination – the incredible Himalaya's. Image by Lauren Chartier.

Fitness

We both started our own fitness regimes to build up the cardio and muscle strength required to take on the trek. This included plenty of running 3-4 times a week, gradually increasing our distance (or, you can be like Lauren and train to run and complete a marathon), weights (especially leg strengthening) and hiking. As we both reside in Adelaide, we are blessed to have many hiking trails so close by in the Adelaide Hills to help us prepare.

However, if you don't live near hiking trails you can adapt to make the most of what you have. One of the blogs I read was by a guy who prepared for his trip to Base Camp while living in Brooklyn. He used the stairs at his workplace to get used to uphill trekking and even



parts of Central Park for his training. You just have to be creative sometimes! Although many blogs stated you do not need to be at an extreme level of fitness, people found the trek much more enjoyable having built up their fitness levels before they set off.

Preparing for the altitude

The only difficult area in which to prepare for is the altitude. Adelaide being at sea-level meant we were restricted in that sense. There are altitude masks you can buy which create the effect of high altitude breathing however, they're pricey – so we decided they weren't necessary.

We felt that with proper medication, spending time acclimatising on the trek and by taking it slowly, we'd be okay.



Hiking in your local area is a great way to prepare for the trek to Base Camp. Here's Tom hiking in the Adelaide Hills. Image by Lauren Chartier.

Packing

The next thing we needed was to make sure we had the right gear and clothing. Trekking around some of the highest altitudes on earth means that you want to make sure the gear you take is going to be reliable. A trip to Snowy's Outdoors sorted us out, especially with the main piece of equipment all trekkers rely on – their boots. We both bought 'Asolo, Fugitive GTX' boots and straight away could tell they were worth every cent.

Like all boots, it's essential to wear them in before you head off (it's recommended to wear



trek boots for at least 3 months' prior to your trip) however, the Fugitive's were not only incredibly supportive right from the start, but extremely comfortable to wear especially while trekking over rough terrain.

The other reason we needed to make sure we had the right gear was because we were heading to Base Camp in December (ideal times to do Base Camp are April to May - September to November), and as it was going to be getting colder in the Himalayas, we both made sure we had warm but breathable clothing for the trek. Here is a list of items which we recommend taking to Base Camp.



Here's an idea of what to add to your checklist when taking on Mt Everest Base Camp.

Travel documents

Passport + copies, travel insurance, cash/credit card and your itinerary.

Equipment

Trekking pack, day pack, 3L water pack or water bottle, 0 to -15 sleeping bag, lightweight towel, hiking poles, headlamp.

Footwear

Hiking boots, spare boot laces, casual shoes, hiking socks.



Clothing

Down/Fleece jacket, wind and waterproof jacket & pants, upper and lower thermals, t-shirts, gloves, underwear.

Sun protection

Bucket Hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, lip balm.

Snacks

Snack food (chocolates + energy food).

Toiletries

Hand sanitising lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, mini shampoo, soap, roll on deodorant, wet wipes, moisturiser, toilet paper, mirror.

General

Phone & charger, plug adapter, batteries, binoculars, reading/writing material, swiss army knife, scarf, ear plugs, colouring books and pencils.

First-aid kit

Aspirin, Band-aids, Imodium (for mild cases of diarrhoea), Rehydration powder, Chlorine Dioxide (water purification tablets), Diamox (For altitude sickness).

So with all the gear set and our training getting us into shape, the time had (finally) come to set off to Nepal! In the next article, before we head off to start our trek to Everest Base Camp, we'll share our experience and highlights of the beautiful city Kathmandu.

For some, making it to the base of the world's highest mountain is a pretty big feat. But is the preparation really that much different from other difficult treks? Leave your thoughts below.