

THE VIRGIN HIKER

Why We Suggest Six Months of Preparation and Training

We recommend six months of preparation for one simple reason — it takes time (and a bit of money) to get trail-ready.

Putting together a full hiking pack doesn't happen overnight. Researching, trialling, and purchasing gear adds up — not just in time, but in cost too. On top of that, building strength and muscle takes consistent effort. You can't fast-track fitness, and no one becomes mountain-ready in a few weeks.

That's why six months is our go-to guideline for first-time hikers.

Now, if you're coming straight from the couch — meaning very unfit and haven't exercised in years — then you might need 8 to 12 months to get ready, and that's totally okay. Everyone starts somewhere.

On the flip side, if you're someone who already runs twice a week and lifts weights regularly, then your base fitness is solid. In that case, you may only need 12 weeks to get used to hiking with a full pack and break in your boots. But keep in mind — gear setup still costs \$2,000–\$3,000, so even for the fit folks, six months can be kinder on the bank account.

Personally, I once gave myself 12 weeks to train for a 17 km mountain trail run — and trust me, those 12 weeks flew by. I train all year round, and even I wished I had more time. That's why I stress this timeline to new hikers.

Six months might *sound* like a long time, but it's meant to take pressure off you — not pile it on. It gives you room to build your kit, build your body, and build confidence. Be kind to yourself. Prepare early. It's the secret to success.

Thanks for trusting the HIKE WITH MAREE process.

Happy Hiking,

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