

Preparation

Oxfam Trailwalker is not an easy event, so participants must have a reasonable level of fitness, good planning, and adequate training. Attending a first aid course together with your teammates is recommended.

Note To Team Leader

Good communication and thorough understanding among team members are essential to avoid any disputes due to differences in expectations. The team leader in particular plays an important role in terms of preparing and coordinating before and after the event, and is required to:

1. **Confirm the team members as soon as possible** and confirm that teammates are ready to commit the time and resources required to prepare for and attend the event.
2. **Work out a training schedule with teammates** and set training targets for the team according to the team's training progress.
3. **Put together a support team** and ensure other preparations as well as the supporting plan and schedule are in place.
4. **Keep teammates and support team informed of the information provided by the Organiser.**
5. Collect all donations after the event and send them to Oxfam by **28 February 2021**.



- 1. Make sure you acquaint yourself with the route through practice walks, particularly sections where you will be walking in the dark.** The trail is clearly marked on the countryside maps of Sai Kung & Clear Water Bay, North East & Central New Territories, and North West New Territories. These maps are available at the following Major Map Publications Centres:
 - 23/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong (Tel. 2231 3187)
 - 382 Nathan Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon (Tel. 2780 0981)For the locations of CPs, please refer to P.31-38 or to the Oxfam Trailwalker Google Map on the Oxfam Trailwalker website. **Always take a map and a compass with you when practising.**
- 2. Due to COVID-19, outdoor activities are not suggested, participants please stay home do more stretching exercise to keep yourself healthy and strong. Before and during training sessions, please be aware of the weather, and the health and safety of your teammates. Walk at least once a week for a minimum of four to six hours (about 15- 25km).** Plan a schedule with your teammates and stick to it. However, if weather conditions are unfavourable (e.g. rain, thunderstorms, or high temperatures coupled with high humidity) on the day of your training session, you should consider changing the route or even suspending practice. Since the rules require that team members stay together along the trail, it is advisable that all members practise walking at a similar speed.
- 3. You are recommended to increase the distance and / or time of your walks slightly every time you practice.** All walks should include some hill work and rough cross-country sections. Please also bear in mind that a large part of the trail is on concrete paths or roads and so you will also need to train on hard surfaces. By the end of the training period, you should be comfortable with walking continuously for 10-11 hours without difficulty.
- 4. Please make sure you have sufficient food and water with you.** Dehydration is a real risk and can result in serious injury or even death. **The intake of appropriate levels of sodium (i.e. salt) is also recommended.**
5. As part of your training, choose a weekend to practise night hiking. Distance, terrain, and direction can feel very different in the dark, and walking on rough terrain while using a torch is a skill that needs to be practised. **Predict which sections of the trail you will be walking at night and choose them to practise night hiking.**
6. If support members or friends join any of your practices, be sure that they are sufficiently prepared as well to ensure their safety and that they can enjoy the walk.
- 7. As the event draws near, perhaps prior to the last two weeks before the event, try walking about 8-10 hours over two consecutive days.** This will help you get accustomed to walking when you are feeling stiff and tired. However, remember to allow your muscles to relax two weeks before the event.
8. For those who want to complete the route with as little discomfort as possible, a short run everyday will serve as additional basic training in strength and fitness.
9. Tired muscles start to stiffen after long rests. **Shorter, more frequent stops are more advisable during the event.**
10. Warm up before you start the event and after subsequent rests. This will enhance the flexibility of your body.
- 11. Letting the slowest teammate set the pace is a good tactic** to finish as a whole team.



Mind Your Feet

1. Wear a pair of good hiking boots or running shoes. **Make sure your feet are well adapted to them before the event by wearing them on practice walks.**
2. Experienced walkers have found that **double socking helps enormously.** Some walkers recommend **wrapping the feet with adhesive bandages** while others suggest that you **massage your feet with Vaseline prior to walking.** Try these during your training sessions and pick what works best for your feet.
3. **A pedicure a week before the event** will help you avoid toe injuries when going downhill.
4. Changing socks as often as possible can help prevent blisters. **Never try to remove a blister;** instead, place a plaster over it.

What to Wear and Carry

1. Plan what you are going to carry and what others will carry, then take turns carrying your shared items. **Let your support team bring the rest to support points.**
2. It is most important that you carry sufficient water and warm clothes.
3. **Plan what to wear, remembering that the weather can change dramatically during the event.** You will need warm clothing to change into, especially if your clothes become wet.
4. There are occasional cold fronts in January; it is not uncommon for temperatures to drop below 10°C in urban areas. The lowest temperature recorded at the Observatory was 0°C, although sub-zero temperatures and frost occur at times on high ground and in the New Territories. **Participants should not only bring items to protect them from the sun, but also warm clothes to stay warm.**
5. A reliable hiking pole can be very helpful for long walks like this.
6. Water provides ideal rehydration but occasionally, a sweeter energy drink makes all the difference to a deflating spirit and tired legs. Lightweight, high-energy bars, or pieces of fruitcake are also helpful. However, fatty and high-protein foods should generally be avoided.
7. Knee and ankle bandages are useful for preventing injuries to muscles, ligaments, and joints.
8. Basic first aid will be provided at CPs. It is recommended that **you also bring your own first aid kit and medicine** in case of injuries or emergencies on the trail.



You are strongly advised to purchase your own insurance prior to participating in the event. Get yourself well-prepared for the trail!



The Kowloon Central Cluster Voluntary Medical Team will provide first aid and emergency medical treatment along the 100 km trail during the Oxfam Trailwalker. At each of the 11 CPs (including the Start and Finish Points), our volunteer doctors and nurses will provide medical treatment for injured participants. However, please note that they will not provide massages or tape participants' feet.

Common problems walkers encounter:

1. Foot blisters

We normally leave small blisters intact if they are not too problematic. However, we usually drain bigger blisters and cover them with a dressing to reduce pain and friction. You might need to change the dressing if it becomes soaked or detached. **Please note: Wear a comfortable and broken-in pair of shoes. Wearing new shoes is not a good idea.**

2. Knee pain

Knee pain can be caused by either overuse or a sprain. RICE (rest, ice, compression, elevation) is the initial treatment. We provide analgesic balm and oral analgesia (if you are not allergic to it) at the medical tent. We may also provide an elastic bandage for you to better support your knee. If symptoms are severe, please consider withdrawing from the event.

3. Exhaustion

Exhaustion can be physical and/or mental. **Preparing yourself for different conditions during your training will help you overcome these difficulties during the event.** Weather variations can have adverse effects on your body. It may be hot and humid during the day but suddenly turn cold and windy at night. Appropriate clothing and dietary support will help reduce these adverse effects in your body.

4. Muscle cramps

The cause is controversial and still not fully understood, however, there is no evidence to suggest muscle cramps are caused by sodium depletion. As such, **we do not recommend that walkers take salt tablets as a treatment or prevention.** Salt tablets can cause stomach irritation and vomiting. Instead, proper training and rest, adequate fluid replacement and stretching can provide relief.

5. Fainting

There are many causes but dehydration is one of the main reasons. **Make sure you are adequately hydrated throughout the event. We do not recommend consuming alcohol after finishing the event,** as there have been instances where walkers have fainted after doing so. This may have been caused by a combination of dehydration and vasodilatation from the alcohol, resulting in a sudden drop in blood pressure.





Support under the COVID-19 pandemic

NEW:

1. Due to COVID-19 and to keep appropriate social distancing, we strongly suggested the teams to minimize their size of support team, two to three support team members are good enough.
2. When providing support to teams, maintain social distance and wear a mask. Cover your nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Do not spit or litter. Use tissue paper to hold your spit. Dispose of the soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, and then wash hands thoroughly.
3. Avoid touching animals (including wild pig, monkey, poultry / birds or their droppings)
4. Provide foods that are convenient to eat (such as rice ball, bread or potatoes), when preparing the food, please keep your hands clean. Do not share food with others with the same utensils to avoid cross infection.
5. Always keep your hands clean after you have any body contact (e.g providing massage, changing clothes or towelng off to the walkers etc.) with the walkers.
6. Keep contact with the walkers to have a better estimation of their arrival times to the checkpoints to avoid waiting long at the checkpoints.
7. If you have a fever or respiratory symptoms, do not go to support area and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The Role and Mentality of the Support Team

1. A good support team can make a huge difference. The support team is there not only to provide support to trailwalkers, but also complete the 100 km with the 4 registered participants; making Oxfam Trailwalker even more so a 'Team event'.
2. Support teams should be helpful, positive, patient, flexible, calm, and take initiative to handle any emergencies. They should adjust their mentality, expectations and actions to work with participants in completing the route. Having prior experience in Trailwalker would be ideal.
3. Except food and clothes for participants, support teams are needed to be photographers, masseuses, psychological counselors, timekeepers, escorts, etc.

A good plan and communication are The way to success

1. **Support team members should familiarise themselves with the trail beforehand. Prior to the event, walkers and their support teams should survey all support points** to ensure they know exactly where to meet.
2. **You should have a map showing the precise locations of the CPs** and a timetable showing your team's estimated time of arrival at each CP. (Please refer to P.39 for the Suggested Timetable for Walkers section.) You can also refer to the Oxfam Trailwalker online tracking system for teams' last arrived checkpoint.
3. Mobile phones make communication easier between teams and support teams. **Test the reliability of the phones before the event as transmission signals may be weak in some areas. Try to use text messages in these areas.**
4. Keep in close contact with the walkers during the event. **To avoid traffic congestion, you should arrive at CPs not more than 30 minutes before the estimated arrival time of your team.**
5. Plan what you will carry (please refer to P.41 'Suggested Checklist'). We suggest that **walkers avoid drinking alcohol during the event or at the Finish Point** as they might have an allergic reaction after having walked for hours.

Keep yourself safe to be able to give the best help on the trail

1. CPs can be very cold at night. Wear warm clothes. Bring a torch and be prepared to wait. **Some CPs can be very crowded, so please be patient.**
2. It is also important that **support team members have sufficient food and drink as well as other essentials** if they wish to accompany the participating team to walk for a certain section. Please avoid blocking other participating teams on the trail and give way to other teams when appropriate.
3. For the sake of fairness, **support teams are not allowed to provide any physical assistance to participants, such as pushing the participants forward.**

Green Trailwalker together

1. Support teams can join 'Green Trailwalker' together to **reduce using disposable cutlery or utensils**; prepare an accurate quantity of food to avoid leftovers.
2. Support teams should **discard trash at refuse collection points and should not leave any items including leftover foods at support points. You are also welcome to place trash into recycle bins / recycle bags at Checkpoints if available. Please keep the area clean.**



Traffic arrangement at Checkpoints

The number of support team members and cars have increased in recent years. While it is good to see growing support for the event and its participants, we have received complaints about the inconvenience large crowds have brought to villagers and other people on the trail. Therefore, **we strongly urge support teams to avoid driving to checkpoints and the finish point.** The cooperation and support of everyone is crucial to enabling all walkers to complete the trail.

1. Please try to use public transport where possible. Parking has become a problem as the event has grown. **The police will not make exceptions for Oxfam Trailwalker support teams when issuing tickets for illegal parking.** If you will be driving, please remember to leave plenty of time to allow for traffic jams, and be prepared to park some distance away from the CPs, Finish Point and walk the rest of the way.
2. A free shuttle service (please refer to the announcement on the website for the bus schedule) will be provided at the following locations:
 - Between the Start Point at Pak Tam Chung and CP2 from noon to 22:00, 29 January, 2021.
 - Between the Tsuen Wan MTR Station to CP8 from 16:00, 29 January, to 23:00, 30 January, 2021
 - Between the Finish Point and Yuen Long from 07:00, 30 January, to 07:00, 31 January
3. During the event, temporary traffic control will be implemented at the Start Point, CP2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and the Finish Point. Support teams driving to CPs should read the 'Checkpoints' section (P.31- 38) carefully, especially regarding the parking arrangement at the Finish Point. You can also refer to the 'Event' > 'Trail & Checkpoints' section on the Oxfam Trailwalker website for more details. Please also be reminded to switch off the vehicle engine while waiting to reduce emissions.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Some CPs are located in country park areas where private cars are not allowed. In such areas, all support teams must use public transport and follow country park regulations. For details, please visit <https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap208> and refer to 'Chapter 208 Country Parks Ordinance'. The Organiser will NOT provide a Country Park Permit for any participant or support team.

Special arrangements may need to be made during the event due to adverse weather conditions or other unpredictable occurrences. In such instances, the Organiser will inform walkers of arrangements by text message (SMS).

Heat stroke

A heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature at high temperatures. Sufferers often feel hot, dizzy, and uneasy, and in serious cases, go into shock and become unconscious. **Should this happen, lower the sufferer's body temperature and seek medical assistance right away.**

Safety guidelines:

Drink plenty of water and take good rests during the hike. Try to avoid being in the sun for too long.

Emergency measures:

Move the person suffering from heat stroke to a cool, shaded place. Loosen their clothing and help them lie down with their feet elevated. Give them lots of fluids if they are conscious. Give the sufferer plenty of space and use other body-cooling techniques like fanning, wetting the clothing, and immersion in water, until the symptoms disappear.

Hypothermia

A rapid drop in body temperature due to a lack of sufficient clothing in a cold place or sudden rain can cause hypothermia. **This can happen even in summer**, symptoms include fatigue, exhaustion, clammy skin, stumbling, shivering, muscle spasms, stammering, and hallucinations.

Safety guidelines:

Get a good night's sleep before the event. Rest at intervals. Do not overstrain yourself.

Emergency measures:

Remove wet clothing right away. Cover the head, face, neck, and body with clothing to keep warm. Consume hot drinks and high-calorie food to maintain body temperature.

Lightning

Lightning normally strikes at the highest point of an object and the electric current is conducted to the ground via the least resistant path. Hikers hit by lightning may suffer from muscle spasms, scalding, suffocation, and cardiac arrest.

Safety guidelines:

Listen to the weather forecast. **Avoid hiking when weather conditions are unstable, especially when the thunderstorm warning signal is hoisted. Wear shoes or boots with rubber soles outdoors.**

Emergency measures:

- Do not stand on top of a hill or near any object with high conductivity. As trees and poles can easily be struck by lightning, remember to stay far away from these objects.
- After lightning strikes an object, its electrical current will spread through the ground. Therefore, avoid lying on the ground, especially on ground that is wet. Squat and minimise your area of contact with the ground as much as possible.
- Do not touch any wet objects.
- Stay away from iron fences or other metal objects. Remove all metal objects (e.g. gold ornaments) from your body and do not use a mobile phone.
- Do not touch antennas, water pipes, iron mesh, or other similar metal installations.
- Do not touch inflammable materials, such as kerosene or liquefied petroleum gas.
- Be wary of strong winds as they may be a sign of an oncoming thunderstorm.

Take shelter in a building whenever possible. Walkers should stay at CPs if the thunderstorm warning signal is hoisted. CP staff reserve the right to prevent walkers from proceeding until the signal is cancelled.



Hill fires

Hill fires advance rapidly upward and windward on steep grassy slopes in dry weather. Never underestimate their devastating power. Hill fires are difficult to detect in sunlight. Always pay attention to flying ash or a burning smell. If a hill fire is spotted, leave the scene right away.

Safety guidelines:

Except at designated barbecue sites or campsites, never light a fire within country parks. Smokers should refrain from smoking. All cigarette stubs or matches should be completely extinguished before discarding them in litter bins. It is difficult to assess the speed at which a hill fire spreads. Never risk continuing your journey if there is a fire nearby or you may get trapped in the fire.

Emergency measures:

Stay calm and do not panic. **Never attempt to put out a hill fire by yourself. Escape to a place with less vegetation,** but avoid moving in the direction of the prevailing wind. If the fire is close and there is no way out, you should cover your exposed skin with wet clothing and then make for the burnt area. This can reduce the risk of injury.



Mountain torrents

Mountain torrents can occur after downpours. Small streams may develop into torrents of sufficient strength to wash hikers away

Safety guidelines:

Stay away from streams and stream beds especially at their lower reaches during and after downpours. Never attempt to cross submerged bridges. Rapid flows and muddy water are early signs of torrents. **Leave the water course without delay.**

Emergency measures:

If you fall into a rapid flow, grip onto the rocks, branches or vines near the banks. Try to get ashore and leave the river course right away.



Landslides

Landslides may occur when a large amount of rainwater has soaked a natural or man-made slope during a downpour or after a few days of heavy rain.

Safety guidelines:

Avoid going near or staying around steep slopes. The emission of a large quantity of muddy water from the base or from the weep holes of a slope indicates that the slope is saturated with water. Exposure of the inner soil of the slope and the appearance of new cracks on the slope are early signs of a landslide. **Keep away from such slopes. Do not proceed by stepping onto the loose mud if a landslide blocks your way; instead, you should retreat or seek a safer route immediately.**

Emergency measures:

Do not attempt to rescue anyone buried in a landslide. You should call the Organiser and dial 999 for help to avoid causing more casualties.



International distress signals

Send out six long signals within one minute; pause for one minute and repeat. Do not stop until the rescue team comes (continue with the signals even if the rescue team has spotted you from a long distance as your exact position has to be identified).

Ways of sending signals:

- 1) Blowing a whistle
- 2) Reflecting light with a mirror or metal sheet
- 3) Flashing your torchlight at night
- 4) Waving colourful or shiny clothes to attract attention



The Organiser advises all participants to read carefully the information about country parks and hiking trails on the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department webpage carefully:
https://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/country/cou_vis/cou_vis_gac/cou_wha_whe_sat.html