



Camper Preparedness on Teen Programs Western Trip 2019

Tamarack Camps' Teen Programs include physically challenging adventures and activities, but given proper preparation, it will not be beyond your physical limits. If you are already in good shape, keep it up. No previous backcountry experience is required, but a willingness to learn and work with others will assure you have a positive adventure in such a challenging environment.

To help you have the best summer experience, it is necessary to be in an appropriate emotional and physical condition.

1) Physical Preparation

Every minute you put in prior to your summer experience will pay off once you get out there. If you do not already engage in **30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week**, we recommend putting in the time to begin training now. Before a teen begins any exercise program, please consult with their physician.

The most important kind of training is aerobic fitness (running/jogging, bicycling, skating...), the kind which stimulates heart and lung activity for at least 30 minutes without stopping. You can also consider specific training techniques to prepare for the summer such as climbing stairs or walking around your neighborhood with weight in your backpack.

2) Western Trip Physical Expectations

Western Trip campers will be hiking in State and National Parks throughout the summer. Some of the hikes will be in higher elevation and other times in high heat.

Teens should expect to hike nearly every day, for an average of 6-10+ miles. Some of the hikes throughout the summer will be steep, long and physically challenging while others will be shorter and easier. In addition to the day hikes, campers will participate in two backpacking trips ranging from 3-4 days, weather permitting. On these backpacking trips, campers will carry a 30+ pound pack.

Campers will stop, rest and take breaks regularly throughout the hikes and do not need to be able to hike these distances non-stop. The breaks will range from 5-30 minutes, some for water, and others for a snack or lunch.

Teens are expected to be in good enough physical shape and to keep up with the group. An extremely slow hiker may compromise the safety of the community by dividing staff and campers by creating a large distance. Staff will work with a camper to find an appropriate pace and a place to hike where they can be a part of the community. If a camper is unable to keep up, they may have to leave the trip early.

3) Emotional Readiness

Just as you might discuss expectations prior to the start of a new school year, we strongly suggest you help prepare your teen for new and exciting challenges awaiting on their Western Trip. The experiences in our teen programs require campers to be mentally and emotionally fit going into the program. This includes readiness for being an active participant, functioning positively with peers and staff, learning to communicate challenges and bringing a positive attitude each day.

Our programs provide teens with unique and sometimes unfamiliar experiences and environments. This can be very exciting as well as elicit anxiety. Review the itinerary and show confidence in what they will be doing. Discuss with your teen what fears/concerns/thoughts they may have about their upcoming trip. Help brainstorm strategies to manage fears and take on challenges. If they have questions or concerns about the trip, get in contact with the Director of Teen and Family Programs prior to camp. We can provide support and help to demystify any aspects of the experience.

4) Personal Equipment

Teens should spend at least six weeks breaking in their hiking boots, even if they were used the previous summer. In order to break them in, campers should wear a school backpack with books while “hiking” around the neighborhood for at least thirty minutes, three days a week. This will help soften the hiking boots and toughen up their feet to prevent blisters during the trip.

I understand the information stated above and will make sure that my teen is/I am prepared for the upcoming summer experience.

Further, I understand that if my teen’s participation in the social, physical or mental/emotional aspect of the program is determined to be insufficient by the Director of Teen & Family Programs and staff members, he/she will be required to return home early. The costs associated with the early departure will be the responsibility of the teen’s family.

I understand, acknowledge and agree to the policy above:

Teen’s Name

Teen’s Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian’s Name

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date