



QUEST
ADVENTURE SERIES



GYM-BASED TRAINING PLAN
FOR ADVENTURE RACING

BERNARD SMYTH



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ABOUT BERNARD

Bernard Smyth is a regular Quest participant and owner of Ultimate Conditioning in Trim, County Meath. Bernard trains individuals and groups of people to take part in adventure races across the country. He has produced this comprehensive training plan drawing on his years of experience in strength and conditioning as well as competing in adventure races.

WHY INCLUDE THE GYM IN YOUR TRAINING?

With the longer distances on Quest events being similar to an endurance event, it's important to complement your running and cycling with strength training in the gym. This will be a welcome addition to your training, especially in the winter months. With three different disciplines to contend with in Quest events, as well as uneven terrain, your body needs to be suitably prepared and your endurance and strength levels at their optimum.

Gym-based exercises can form a significant part of any Quest training plan, but it can often be met with the question *'why should I strength train? It's another hour on my training schedule that I could be running or cycling'*.

The answer is that strength training for sport has many benefits when implemented

correctly, from increasing your strength and power, to increasing mobility and stability about your joints.

Focusing on increasing your strength and power will help make you a faster athlete, but crucially will reduce the risk of injury. Some injuries are unavoidable, yet wouldn't you prefer to fix that niggling hamstring or ankle you keep going over on?

Next, ask yourself, how long you have been trying to knock a few seconds off your running P.B or off that hill climb you test yourself on? And how many little niggles have you picked up over the years?

If you're seeing little results here then you need to change the way you look at your training and see where you can get the most benefit in the time you have to train.

THE REASONS BEHIND THIS WORKOUT

If you want to be faster, stronger and reduce your risk of injury you need to focus on a gym plan designed specifically for the task of throwing yourself down a mountain as fast as you can or climbing a 10% incline on the bike. Adventure racing presents some unique challenges that you must prepare for accordingly.

Six-week strength 'base line builder'

WHO: aimed at those who are starting out in the gym or who use the gym infrequently.

Weeks 1-6. Base line builder	Mobility Focused Warm-Up x 2 rounds	Groiner and rotation	30 sec each	Single Leg cone touch	30 sec each
		Inch Worms	30 sec	Specific personal mobility	
		Toe touch, over head squat	30 sec		

	EXERCISES	TEMPO**	REST	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6 DL
1a	Single Leg Squat <i>Controlled. Lower box / step to increase difficulty.</i>	2:1	60 sec	8x3	8x3	10x3	10x3	12x3	12x3
1b	Dumbbell Step Up <i>Aim to control the descent from top to bottom.</i>	1:2		12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3
2a	Walking Lunges <i>Slow and controlled.</i>	2:1	60 sec	12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3	10x3	10x3
2b	Swiss Ball Hamstring Curl <i>Squeeze hips up and pull heels in.</i>	2:1		12x3	12x3	15x3	15x3	15x3	15x3
3a	1/2 Kneeling Dumbbell Shoulder Press <i>Brace abs, hips Square.</i>	2:1	60 sec	12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3	10x3	10x3
3b	Swiss Ball Transfer <i>Slow and controlled.</i>	Control		30 sec x3	40 sec x3	50 sec x3	60 sec x3	70 sec x3	80 sec x3
4a	Dumbbell Renegade Row <i>Hips flat, core locked.</i>	1:3	60 sec	8-8-8	8-8-8	10-10-10	10-10-10	10-10-10	12-12-12
4b	Mountain Climbers <i>Slow!!</i>	1:2		30 sec x3	40 sec x3	50 sec x3	60 sec x3	60 sec x3	60 sec x3
	Core complex. Complete 2 rounds no rest* <i>Toe tap plank</i> <i>Sky divers</i> <i>Shoulder tap plank</i>	Control	None	30 sec 30 sec 30 sec	30 sec 30 sec 30 sec	40 sec 40 sec 40 sec			

*Times can be increased to increase difficulty. Start by adding 10 seconds to each and work from there. Or pop your feet into a trx for plank movements to increase difficulty.

** Tempo is the speed at which you complete the movement. For example, if you do a push-up at a 2:1 tempo for example, it would be a 2 second descent and a 1 second push.

Six-week strength development

WHO: for those who have completed the base line builder. They are frequent gym users but want to start doing sessions specific to adventure racing.

Weeks 7-12. Strength development. Advancement for base line builder program or starting program for advanced		Mobility Focused Warm-Up x 2 rounds	Groiner and rotation		Single Leg cone touch				
			Inch Worms		Specific personal mobility				
			Toe touch, over head squat						
	EXERCISES	TEMPO**	REST	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6
1a	Dumbbell Split Squat <i>Controlled. Lower box / step to increase difficulty.</i>	2:1	60 sec	8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3
1b	Swiss Ball / TRX Hamstring Curls <i>Aim to control the descent from top to bottom.</i>	2:2		15x3	15x3	15x3	15x3	15x3	15x3
2a	Dumbbell Step-Ups <i>High step, full control on descent.</i>	2:1	60 sec	12x3	12x3	12x3	12x3	10x3	10x3
2b	Lateral Band Walks <i>Small Steps.</i>	2:1		15x3	15x5	15x5	15x3	15x3	15x3
3a	Dumbbell Romanian Deadlift (RDL) <i>Slight bend in the knees, hinge at hips.</i>	2:1	60 sec	10x3	10x3	10x3	10x3	10x3	10x3
3b	Single Leg Squat <i>Lower height to increase difficulty.</i>	Control		8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3	8x3
4a	Push-Ups <i>Core locked, full range.</i>	1:3	60 sec	45 sec x3					
4b	Dumbbell Renegade Row <i>Core locked, no movement from hips.</i>	1:2		10x3	10x3	10x3	10x3	8x3	8x3
4c	1/2 Kneeling Shoulder Press <i>Core locked, hips square.</i>			10x3	10x3	10x3	10x3	8x3	8x3
	Core complex. Complete 2 rounds no rest* <i>Toe tap plank</i> <i>Sky divers</i> <i>Shoulder tap plank</i>	Control	None	30 sec 30 sec 30 sec	30 sec 30 sec 30 sec	40 sec 40 sec 40 sec			

*Times can be increased to increase difficulty. Start by adding 10 seconds to each and work from there. Or pop your feet into a trx for plank movements to increase difficulty.

** Tempo is the speed at which you complete the movement. For example, if you do a push-up at a 2:1 tempo for example, it would be a 2 second descent and a 1 second push.



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With time being in short supply for most of us, both plans are designed to deliver specific strength training sessions in realistic time periods.

The warm-ups consist of whole-body focused movements. They are aimed at increasing your range of motion from your ankles to your wrists.

During your main workout, focus on strengthening your body using single leg exercises. This includes exercises that demand our bodies to stabilise the musculature around the hips, knees and ankles. Essentially, these are exercises that mimic the demands of adventure racing. From single leg squats and walking lunges to half kneeling shoulder press and renegade rows, these movements are replicating the demands of adventure racing.

There is still a place for conventional squats and deadlifts. They should be utilised occasionally but ask yourself whether you could benefit more from building increased stability and control of your joints? Will a conventional squat or deadlift provide the same single leg feedback that you need when thundering down a rocky hill? No, but a single leg squat, split squat or lunge will allow you to develop better balance and stability from your ankles to your hips and beyond.

Be as consistent with these sessions as you are with your running and biking, and I guarantee you will set a P.B. Go and beat that hill climb or knock that niggler on the head!

Medical Disclaimer: Always consult your doctor before beginning any exercise program. If you experience any pain or difficulty with this program, stop and consult your doctor.