

# **Saltmarsh75**

## **Walkers Training Guide**

### **2017**



**[www.saltmarsh75.co.uk](http://www.saltmarsh75.co.uk)**

SALTMARSH75





## Welcome Walkers!

We're really proud of the Saltmarsh75 and the fact that it allows all participants with an opportunity to push new personal limits. Each participant will have different levels of experience and different motivations for entering the event. Some will be seasoned walkers looking for a new challenge and others will be first timers excited by the prospect of completing their first long distance challenge.

Feedback from the saltmarsh community from both walkers and runners is consistent, the 75 is MUCH harder than people expect. Most people put that down to the fact that it's a flat course with occasionally difficult, uneven ground conditions. Distance walking is as much about psychology as about physical fitness and there are parts of the course that will certainly play games with your mind and that will take considerable resolve to complete. Certain sections are very remote and can be quite hostile environments in bad weather. This is why we make a big effort at our checkpoints, we want to help you reach your goals, keep your spirits high, offer you encouragement and sympathy in equal measure. Most importantly keep you safe.

As well as our walkers training guide its worth reading our Course Guide (coming soon) which will give a little more information about what to expect on each stage or leg.

For 2017, we have developed a downloadable walkers training plans.

## How Fit?

Most people that are seriously considering entering either a day or the full event will probably already have a solid level of fitness. The good news is that if that's not the case and you're entering early in the year there is plenty of time left to train and get ready for the challenge. For many the training is part of the fun and if you are walking with others, a great chance to develop lasting friendships.

Training will be important to give you the endurance and stamina needed to complete the Saltmarsh 75 in relative comfort and help protect your body from injury. There is no doubt that completing a 75 mile walk is a significant distance that 'normal people' would consider a fairly long car journey!

The training you undertake will prepare your body for spending long periods of time moving, and will enable you to time to find what works for you. Walking long distances will undoubtedly test your body and when it is fatigued, normally hidden issues, may suddenly start to play up. Training will give you a chance to test your body and enable you to correct any niggles that might occur.



So if this is your long distance event, perhaps it's worth spending a few minutes considering what is involved. The 75 mile course is split over two days with an enforced break at the village of Steeple. The First day at 38.5 miles is slightly further than day two (36.5m) and has the 'Queens Stage' of Burnham on Crouch to Bradwell Orthona. At just over 13 miles this is the longest section and is probably also the most remote of the weekend. Its certainly the section where your view will not change dramatically from one mile to the next. There's more information on each of the stages in our course guide [www.saltmarsh75.co.uk/prepare](http://www.saltmarsh75.co.uk/prepare)

Whilst day two is shorter, it also has some long stages with the final stage being both quite tough on the mind.

## **Terrain**

Only a small percentage of the Saltmarsh75 course is on tarmac, probably less than 5 miles, the rest is run over sea walls and footpaths that vary in condition. Some sections are well used gravel paths in good condition but the majority is on rough cut grass and can also be on a camber. It's a great idea to get used to walking on this type of surface and to gain confidence on uneven ground. There's a lot of it to cover. It's not to be underestimated! Each year we receive plenty of feedback from walkers that it's harder than you think. There's no rest bite for the muscles that you use on flat ground.

## **Night Walking**

For most walkers, the Saltmarsh 75 will involve walking at least the last 10-14 miles in poor light or utter darkness. If it's a clear night, you will have plenty of stars for company though not much else. We insist that all walkers carry at least one head torch and spare batteries. As you get to the final check points on both days, we will give you a glow stick. They are used to help us to see you coming and everyone loves a glow stick!

Walking off road at night is something well worth practicing and if you get a chance to try a bit of sea wall before the event that will give you an idea what to expect. The last stages on both days are quite rough so you will need to take care.

If you're alone, in the dark and tired, it can be very intimidating and you will absolutely feel isolated. You don't need to worry as we will be looking out for you and we have a 'sweeper' following round to make sure we don't lose anyone.

## **Nutrition and fuelling**

The chances are you will be on the go for very long periods of time and you will need to eat during the day to keep your energy levels up. As with anything, it's a good idea to try various foods on your training walks to find what works well for you and also what survives the rigors of being stuffed in a rucksack for 7 hours.

At most checkpoints, we provide a range of snack items, such as cakes, crisps, nuts as well as drinks. You absolutely should not rely on these as your sole source of calories for the day. We'll happily take specific items from the start to any of the check

points. Hopefully this means you don't have to carry so much and you've got something to look forward to when you reach that point.



## What to carry / wear

Most people considering entering the Saltmarsh75 will be fairly experienced walkers or runners and will have a good idea of what to take with them on the day. You should be prepared for anything that the British weather can throw at you in October! In previous years we have had all four seasons in one day. Despite being late in the year, it can still be very warm and has been on several occasions. Obviously now that we've mentioned warm weather and frivolously throw in the fact that Maldon is one of the driest places in the UK, it will lash it down for the whole weekend!

In short, you need water proof jacket and trousers, warm weather gear and something warm if it turns cold or at least for the mornings. A warm hat is also recommended.

Footwear is obviously important and walkers very between full on walking boots and wearing lightweight trail shoes. Either choice will be just fine but walking boots probably offer a little more stability on the rough ground and will probably keep your feet a bit dryer if it's wet.

Wear it in!! One of our biggest tips is make sure you practice with the kit you will be wearing on the day and you will certainly need to wear in walking boots. This will give you a chance to work out how to carry

your rucksack and minimise chaffing. Taking care of your body during the day is critical. Ignoring a blister will not make it go away but treating it early might mean that you can continue in relative comfort.

## Navigation

Unlike most road based events the Saltmarsh75 route is not marked. To be clear this means you will need to navigate your way around the course. To help you will be given course instructions for each stage or section at checkpoints. We do mark a few (three or four) points on the route that have proven tricky over the years but the rest is down to you. Honestly it's not a difficult route to follow – keep the water on your right, but making a mistake can mean extra time on your feet and going wrong when you're in pain, tired, hungry and crying for your mum is all too easy.

## Training Plan

Any training plan or programme focuses on slowly increasing the 'load' on your body so that after resting it will be fitter / stronger. In that sense training for an endurance walk is no different to any other type of training. Before starting your training in full it's good to have a solid base from which to work from as this will help minimise the risk of injuries associated with suddenly increasing your exercise levels. Later in the guide we provide an example of training plan. If you are an experienced walker you may well have your own plans and know what works well for you. There is also loads of information on-line about preparing for similar events.

Getting good mileage in your legs in a structured way must be a priority of your plan. If you can, it would be great to mix in, other types of exercise to further add stamina and strength. We'd always encourage you to also think about a flexibility session. This could be the best excuse you will find for starting yoga!

If you're preparing for the full 75 mile challenge, then it is really worth considering building in some back to back walks. This will help you test how your

body responds to walking long distances over a weekend.

We can't stress enough that although Saltmarsh75 is flat it is not an easy course. It is at times rough and this can be tricky when you are already tired.

## Long Walks

Your regular long walks are the backbone of your training plan the activity that will prepare you the most for what to expect over the weekend. As well as preparing your body, they will also help develop / or tone the mental fortitude to complete. As you will be training over the summer, they should help you train your body to deal with the heat (or heavy rain)!

## Cardio Work

Alongside your regular long walks it would be good to build in some higher intensity workouts into your week. These will make you fitter and possibly stronger.

## Core work

We've mentioned before that it's a good idea to integrate some sessions that are focused on stretching and core work. Having good core strength will help your body stable as you get tired, this is often an over looked part of a training programme but gradually people are seeing the benefits. If you're not entirely comfortable with attending a yoga or pilates class then there are loads of videos online that can point you in the right direction.

## The Taper

The last few weeks of the programme will see your weekly mileage tumble to give your body a few weeks of relative rest before the main event. If you've missed training walks before this point, do not be tempted to catch up. Stressing your body at this point will only mean that you arrive at the start line fatigued and that could potentially jeopardise your chances of a successful event. Tapering for some can be frustrating as your body will be raring to go but it will be worth it. You'll need that extra energy at 74 miles!

## The Event

### Checkpoints

There are regular checkpoints on the course, and a few additional water stations. The distances between each checkpoint are shown below and may change slightly due to the exact locations of some checkpoints.

#### Day 1

Start to North Fambridge 5.2 miles  
N Fambridge to Burnham on Crouch 8.7 miles  
Burnham to Bradwell Orthona 13.3 miles  
Orthona to Bradwell marina 3.3 miles  
Bradwell to St Lawrence 4.3 miles  
St Lawrence to Steeple (Day 1 Finish) 3.1 miles

#### Day 2

Steeple (Day 2 start) to Mayland 3.1 miles  
Mayland to Maldon 8 miles  
Maldon to Heybridge 4 miles  
Heybridge to Goldhanger 3.5 miles  
Goldhanger to Tollesbury 10.5 miles  
Tollesbury to FINISH 8.1 miles

You will be required to 'dab' your timing chip at each formal checkpoint so that we can keep a track of people's progress throughout the day. As mentioned before we will deliver / collect specific small items to any of the main checkpoints. Most will use this for particular drinks / food at the checkpoints or maybe for a dry pair of socks. Unlike shorter distance events, most will stop albeit briefly at each checkpoint, so remember to include time for checkpoint stops into your day. Each checkpoint will also have a first aider, radio contact with our control room.

**If you're normally a runner – be prepared to think about how long it takes to walk distances you can cover in way less time running**

## Our Training Programme

The following plan is an example of a basic training plan for walkers looking to complete the whole Saltmarsh 75 mile challenge. If you have a specific time in mind that you want to achieve you may need to focus your training walks at achieving your target walking pace or slightly higher. Don't forget to add time for breaks at check points, we don't stop the clock when you stop. As with any training plan always build in rest periods and in general you should ensure that you have at least two days per week where you rest – i.e. no training at all. Most people would look at training 3 days out of 7. You will notice that the majority of walking is done towards the end of the week and at time three days in a row. This is to make you train when you are slightly fatigued or not fully recovered from a previous walk which helps prepare your body for the main event without having to walk really long distances every week.

The plan is an example, please feel free to modify it to fit with the other priorities that you have in your life.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	<b>30min Aerobic training</b> e.g. walking, cross trainer, spin cycle, treadmill	<b>60min Aerobic</b> e.g. walking, cross trainer, spin cycle, treadmill	<b>30min Aerobic training</b> e.g. walking, cross trainer, spin cycle, treadmill	<b>Rest / Core work</b> e.g. stretching, yoga or Pilates	<b>Rest</b>	<b>6 Mile Walk</b>	<b>Rest</b>
2	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>7 Mile Walk</b>	<b>Rest</b>
3	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>Rest</b>
4	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>60min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>
5	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>60min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>Rest</b>
6	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>90min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>9 Mile Walk</b>	<b>2 Mile Walk</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>
7	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>
8	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>60min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>4 Miles Walk</b>	<b>12 Mile Walk</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>
9	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>90min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>8 Mile Walk</b>	<b>15 Mile Walk</b>	<b>10 Mile Walk</b>
10	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>18 Mile Walk</b>	<b>25 Mile Walk</b>
11	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>	<b>5 Mile Walk</b>
12	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>30min Aerobic</b>	<b>Rest / Core</b>	<b>Rest</b>	<b>SALTMARSH 38</b>	<b>SALTMARSH 36</b>
13	<b>Rest up and enjoy your achievements and recovery!</b>						

## The Saltmarsh Communities top 10 training tips

- 1.** Choose all your clothes at least a month before and walk in it. Whatever you do, DO NOT TINKER WITH IT OR BUY NEW SOCKS/SHOES THE DAY BEFORE!!!
- 2.** It's hard to find the time to do lots of walking but if you can, practice a two day walk. The idea is to get you ready for the pain of day two, it's all in the mind and you can do it but being prepared for some of the sensations will help the mind feel at ease. Do one big walk then make sure you get up early to experience putting your shoes on the next day when your feet are quite frankly ruined. You'll be scared to walk a step but if you do a few miles you know you'll do the rest.
- 3.** Use the checkpoint boxes to get your food delivered and save you carrying too much
- 4.** Find out what you can eat while you walk! Sounds silly, but you don't have time to stop and eat, you'll have to do it on the move. Last year I took sandwiches and cliff bars both of which were too dry to eat and gave me bad indigestion. This year and numerous long lunch time walks later I now know that cheddar sticks, mini pepperonis, baby tomatoes, grapes, hot cross buns, malt loaf and most bizarrely cold rice pudding work for me!!
- 5.** Don't think about the end, focus on finishing each stage – break it down!
- 6.** Work out a 'leave checkpoint by' time based upon the pace you want to achieve each section. Keep it realistic so you feel 'achieved' when you nail it.
- 7.** Smile and enjoy it. Do it your way, your pace and don't worry about others. Be prepared to experience every emotion and hope that your walking partners can put up with you for hours and hours.
- 8.** Wear cycling shorts (Gents) to keep things in place and prevent the need for healing cream after the event! Ouch
- 9.** Use the checkpoint boxes to get your food delivered and save you carrying too much
- 10.** Just find someone you can talk to for 75 miles!

## And one more tip for luck!

Look after your feet, Vaseline them, tape them, change your socks, powder them. Do whatever you can to look after them and you WILL make it. Left Foot, Right Foot, Repeat (another Saltmarsher's Tip).



## Conclusion

The aim of our training guides is to give you a good starting point to help you get to the start line of the Saltmarsh75 in good shape and with the best possible chance of success. There will be alternative ways of training out there and some of the sessions we suggest might not work for some people. Our best piece of advice is find out what works for you. Try not to get bogged down by all the numbers, enjoy your training. You'll spend far greater time training than on the course of the SM75 so you should try to have fun. Most of all good luck and we'll see you in October.