



## RECOMMENDED PHYSICAL CONDITION

### Basic requirements for the walking the Camino

Previous training and personalised planning of the sections are the key.

In order to walk the Way fo St James the pilgrims have to be prepared physically through gymnastic exercise which helps toning and stretching the muscles, especially the legs, the back and the neck. The training should start months in advance prior to the pilgrimage, for example, by going on walks and hikes, which should increase gradually in time and difficulty.

For those in advanced age or with any physical pathology a previous medical opinion is recommended in order to adapt the plan and the effort, and determine what should be avoided along the way.

It is necessary to elaborate a **plan by sections or stages**, adapted to the physical capabilities of each pilgrim. The division should not be understood as rigid and final in a way that they require excessive effort as they could result in injuries and fatigue, which could impede completing the Camino. It is paramount to dose your efforts and follow your own rhythm, especially if the pilgrimage is long and spans many days, as well as to keep in mind the distances between the stops and hostels.

It is recommended to have a guide at hand as an essential help to planning.

Another factor to take into account while planning is the **weather forecast** for the areas we will walk through. This way we will be able to adapt the clothes for hot, cold or wet weather conditions. The latter is very important as it may affect people who suffer chronic muscle or skeletal disorders and conditions.

Another previous measure which is recommended is to prepare your muscles for this significant effort. An appointment at the physical therapist could help lessen the muscle tension, getting us ready for such a long walk.

### How to get ready for walking the Camino

Warming-up and muscle-stretching exercise have to be constant throughout the way.

Previous daily training involving walking longer and longer routes should go hand in hand with warming-up and stretching. These should be repeated while walking the Camino. Stretching and exercise should take place every time before setting off. A

special attention should be given to the calves and the front and back muscles of the thighs (quadriceps and hamstrings, respectively).

### **How to get ready to complete the Camino by bicycle**

Two months of previous training will be necessary.

The recommended length of the stages completed by bike is between 60 and 100 km each. In order to get used to cycling long distances, approximately two-month of previous training will be necessary, adapted to the distance that has been planned for each day.

It is **recommended to cycle in groups**. Special attention has to be paid to the traffic and road rules, like cycling in a single paceline and with safety equipment required by the legislation. It is important to bear in mind that if you are going to complete the Way of St James by bicycle, in order to claim a [Compostela](#) at the end of the trail (at the Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago) you will need to prove you have done at least 200 km of the route.

For the sake of adequate planning of the sections we need to **study in advance the characteristics** of each one of them, which is as important as estimating the physical capabilities of each participant. Cycling gives a unique opportunity to make frequent stops, whenever necessary, as well as visiting places of interest slightly off the route.

While walkers usually advance 4 and 5 km in one hour, a cyclist can do 12 or 13 km in the same time, which means about 60 km in 5 hours.

The best time to set off on a cycling pilgrimage is the **first half of September**, when the hottest season is over and days are still long.

### **How to do the Camino on horseback**

This variety requires special planning and development.

The pilgrimage on horseback has similar requirements in terms of distance as walking although walkers will always have priority before riders and cyclists when it comes to accommodation in **public hostels**. Completing the pilgrimage on horseback requires obviously a very specific planning, for which we recommend consulting specialised organisations and associations to help develop it.

The network of **publicly-run hostels does not allow horses**.

The pilgrims who are planning to enter the town of Santiago with their horses should inform the local police about their arrival several days in advance. They will be informed about the only allowed route and time they can do it, along with the permission to enter [Praza do Obradoiro](#), which will grant them the right to a short stay in the proximity of the [Cathedral](#). The riders are required to leave immediately after and head to the equestrian facility they have booked.

**In 2014 the number of pilgrims travelling on horseback reached 1,520.**