

Choosing your total

Please do not underestimate the bigger totals in this challenge. Time wise we've guessed what the quickest runners might hope to finish different levels and this can give you an idea of your own task.

Box Hill - 15-20 minutes
Kinder Scout - 40-50 minutes
Ben Nevis - 1-1.5 hours
British 3 Peaks - 4-5 hours
Mont Blanc - 6-8 hours
Everest - 16-20 hours
Rum Doodle - 20-25 hours
Olympus Mons - 40-50 hours

When choosing your own challenge we suggest going out in your local area and seeing how much up and down you can clock in an hour. It might just give you an idea of the task at hand.

Planning up the week

For the One Up challenge how you achieve your total will be individual based on factors like these:

Local Terrain - Living at the foot of Snowdon makes this a very different challenge to living in the Fens. Find the best local hills for the challenge. Hopefully travelling somewhere hillier is okay for some days, but check with local Mountain Rescue before heading to bigger summits.

How much you want to enjoy the week - Multiple reps of a 100m hill may be the most efficient, but how much do you want to enjoy the challenge as well?

The time you have - Because of the specific challenge you may have to take into account travel to your hills and this must be considered for the sake of your total time and recovery, but also your family and work commitments.

Your experience: If you're a UTMB/Tor des Geants finisher then maybe you're used to amassing weeks of vert, but if you're more used to less steep races in the UK, then think about taking a progressive step from your current level, rather than choosing a target that will break you. It's the downhill, not the uphill, that will hurt most.

The nitty gritty:

If you're attempting the first three levels then we recommend trying to fit the vertical into your normal training week. Pick hillier routes, plan in some evening hikes with the family up a local hill and include some hills in your long run too. Maybe even add in a couple of specific hill sessions.

Getting to **Three Peaks** and **Mont Blanc** levels you're starting to need to make your week even more focused on hills. Some might get 3-5000m in their normal training, but most won't. Hill repeats will make this a much easier task and it can just be hiking up and jogging down for an hour or two at a time.

Still include some less steep runs in your week, maybe an easy hour on rolling trail, to give your legs a break, but plan in concerted efforts to "chase vert".

Everest (for most), **Rum Doodle** and **Olympus Mons** are levels where you have to go above and beyond your normal training. You're going to have to treat this as a "race week" where the main focus is clocking up elevation. Below is an example of what a 20-24 hour week might look like:

Monday - AM: Hour of up & down a hill to get the week started **PM:** 1 hour hiking

Tuesday: 2-3 hours long hike/run. Walk the ups, jog the rest.

Wednesday: AM: 2 hour Hilly Run **PM:** 1 hour hiking

Thursday: 2-3 hours hike/run Walk the ups, jog the rest.

Friday: AM: 1 hour of up & down a hill **PM:** 1 hour hiking

Saturday: 5-6 hours in the hills.

Sunday: 4-5 hours in the hills.

For most of us this would be a significant undertaking, physiologically, psychologically and as a time commitment.

You can break it up into doubles as much as you can, but if you're travelling for your hills then that needs to be taken into account twice and it may not be more efficient time wise.

Biggest potential problems

Injury - The impact of downhill running is the biggest factor here and if you taking a big progression or trying to fit this challenge around a busy week of work and family, then your risk is higher.

Fuelling/Recovery - Again this is likely beyond your usual training week so thinking about your nutrition will be key, especially as muscle damage from descending will likely be higher too. Think about sufficient carbohydrates for the task at hand and then sufficient carbs and protein availability for recovery too.

That's an extremely simplistic nutritional message, which recommend you research and plan your food before the week, including food during your runs, recovery food and your general weekly diet as well. A good place to start is Renee McGregor's Training Food.

Motivation - As hinted above, you want to enjoy this week too. Vert for the sake of vert can be hard to keep going. If you sacrifice a bit of efficiency to take a gentler, more enjoyable route down or plan on doing a long run to get some elevation instead of up and down the same hill then it will be easier on body and mind.

Conditions - Obviously we're all hoping for a sunny July week, but if it rains heavily in the UK then this can change a lot, maybe most importantly conditions underfoot. Losing traction on the up or downhill will make everything harder. Be soaked to the bone isn't good for you either.

Equally if it's roasting hot then hydration and electrolytes are more important.

Adaptability - This isn't a problem, more a solution, but as the week continues your adaptability, a skill very useful in ultra marathons in general, will be put to test.

This challenge isn't about choosing a total and achieving at all costs, but doing your best. A good ultra runner will understand when to change plans, stop short or go longer on any particular day.

Be adaptable and just do your best.