

# Training a Team for Ten Tors

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## Background

Ten Tors is probably the largest wild country challenge in Britain currently open to young people. Completion can boost self-confidence and aspiration through the development of leadership, problem solving, team work and hillwalking/camping skills.

## Qualifying requirements

As the Challenge takes place on Dartmoor, it is always demanding and conditions can be exceptionally tough. Team Manager's training programmes are expected to ensure that their teams attain the Ten Tors Qualifying Requirements<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> **47 Qualifying.** Before starting, participants are required to qualify for the Ten Tors Challenge by:

- 47.1 Carrying out a structured and progressive programme of training, including team experience of independent walking and wild camping on Dartmoor.
- 47.2 Being sufficiently trained, physically prepared and suitably equipped to enable the team to operate safely on their own and complete the Challenge unaided even in adverse conditions.
- 47.3 Training as a team on at least one expedition. Last minute composite teams are not permitted to take part.

These are reiterated in the Qualifying Requirements declaration which Team Managers must sign at Registration, affirming their teams' compliance.

Every team manager has to decide how this is best achieved with their Establishment and their participants. Whilst we've set out how we do our best to ensure that our teams attain the 'qualifying requirements' – we're not offering a definitive Ten Tors training guide.

Our training reflects the changing Scout Association requirements, best practice and the experience of our respective training teams. We're not claiming originality as we've been happily adopting other peoples' insights and good ideas for years and, should you wish to do so, you're more than welcome to do the same.

## Ten Tors – longstanding presumptions and evolving expectations

The trackers, introduced in 2014, highlighted safety issues and problems including poor hill walking skills and non-compliance with the Rules. The trails show that some teams' and/or Team Managers' interpretation of their routes have scant regard to the Ten Tors Rules and/or the supporting material provided via the website and at Registration. By doing so, they risked bring the Challenge into disrepute by operating in a manner which was incompatible with the Charter, Rules and the spirit of the Challenge.

From Ten Tors 2015 onward, the Ten Tors Policy Committee has directed that active use be made of the tracker system to monitor teams' compliance with the Rules during the Ten Tors Challenge. Warning has been given that non-compliant teams risk being penalised, at the Director's discretion

As Team Managers, in bidding for teams, we affirm our commitment to comply with both the letter and the spirit and the spirit of the Ten Tors Rules and Annexes, and to ensuring that our teams will strive to complete the Challenge as set. Self-evidently, we and our training staff have to be familiar with the Rules and Annexes and committed to ensuring that our team members understand their impact on training and attempting the Challenge. If we haven't internalised the Rules and Annexes ourselves, we'll struggle to communicate their content and spirit to our teams and, as a result, risk short-changing them. Whilst the new trackers have provided irrefutable evidence of poor practice, it is likely that some of the issues identified are longstanding.

As the Challenge should be an opportunity to celebrate success and to maximise our teams' opportunities for Rule-compliant completion, Annexes have been added to the Rules and the routes have been revised. Together these changes will enhance event resilience and reduce opportunities for non-compliance. Given the changes and the advent of active tracker monitoring, team managers are encouraged to review their current practice to ensure compatibility with both the Ten Tors Rules and the spirit of the Challenge.

### **Clarity**

Effective training requires clarity about what you're trying to achieve. As Scouting is about access to adventure, our rationale for involvement in Ten Tors is simple. The wild country Challenge provides a demanding platform for

developing leadership, team work, problem solving, resilience and hill walking skills. The skills learned via Ten Tors provide an exceptional grounding for lifelong adventure – including the development of expeditioning and leadership opportunities.

### **What's your shared vision?**

- Why has your Establishment entered a team in the Ten Tors event?
- Does everyone have a shared of the outcome to be achieved?
- Everyone – the head of establishment, team manager, staff, parents/carers and participants – all need to buy into the shared vision as it underpins the collective investment for success – including whole-hearted commitment to the Rules.

### **The Duty of Care**

Training a Ten Tors team to the 'Qualifying Requirements' starts with well-trained experienced Team managers and leaders, as a duty of care is owed to the participants, their parents/carers and to our respective Establishments. Team Managers and Group Leaders, training teams for Ten Tors, whether volunteer or paid - should:

- be technically competent – hold the relevant qualifications.
- have sufficient relevant experience
- possess the necessary training skills
- be suitable individuals to work closely with young people, with VBS disclosure
- be appointed by their Head of Establishment to undertake Ten Tors training activities – compliant with the applicable LEA, School, Cadet, Girl Guide or Scout Association requirements.
- if paid, meet the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Both Teignbridge and Gordano leaders hold the requisite Scout Association permits – the former’s permits are based on MT Mountain Leader, Hill and Moorland Leader Awards and/or SWMMLTS Walking Group Leader/Camping Leader and the latter’s mainly on Scouting training and assessment provision.

Young people will learn to handle the challenges of life and avoid becoming risk averse if they have opportunities to assess risks and learn how to manage them.

The risks and benefits in outdoor activities can be balanced by a proportionate approach to both safety and adventure, drawing on the Scout Association’s and Mountain Training’s guidance – <http://www.mountain-training.org/downloads>

*Team Managers’ and Group Leaders’ Competence and Responsibility and Hazards and Risks on Dartmoor offer more detailed discussion.*

### **Who do we train?**

Adventure is beneficial for young people’s development, and scouting seeks to offer everyone the opportunity to train, especially those who are not athletes or potential mountaineers.

Recruitment for Ten Tors needs to be set in the context of demanding training, uncertainty of selection for the Challenge team, academic expectations and family commitments. Whilst taking part offers significant short and long term benefits, would-be participants need to be up for

- the duration and intensity of the commitment, as well as
- the demands of the incremental fitness programme and the considerable challenge of long distance backpacking in difficult

terrain in adverse weather in winter and spring.

Given that the demand for places usually exceeds supply, all who want to take part – and their parents – need to understand and accept our team selection criteria. Whilst Scouting criteria such as commitment and perseverance are taken into account, only competent participants who meet the Ten Tors qualifying requirement are entered.

Our selection rationale and processes are made clear to walkers and parents/carers at the start of the training, resulting in fewer surprises when the teams are selected. Consideration and support for those who aren’t selected is critical.

### **How do we train?**

Scouting informs our training model – see *A Progressive Training Model* for our methodology.

As Ten Tors training is demanding for most candidates, there is little room for ambivalence. Whilst academic demands and competing interests can make it tempting to select only young people who are already fit, if the adventure and developmental opportunities offered by Ten Tors training are of value, it’s worth investing in a more extended training regime offering time to develop the necessary stamina. There is no single right approach but to be sustainable, the model adopted must be consistent with the respective Establishment’s priorities.

Make sure your walkers are actually enjoying the experience – preferably at the time, but at least in hindsight; if they aren’t, they have little reason to continue. If the leaders are enjoying the experience, they will communicate their enthusiasm to the walkers; if the leaders aren’t enjoying themselves, your operation is at risk.

As the demands of Ten Tors training can be somewhat daunting, it's easier to deliver quality training via a consortium working with several teams across a Scout District or similar. This offers the economies and resilience of scale, widens the leadership skill base available to the walkers, gives opportunities to mentor less experienced team staff and provides greater team selection flexibility. Self evidently, the partners must be compatible if a consortium model is to work.

## Participation

Scouting also informs our Ten Tors training approach. Safeguarding, DBS checks, the size of training teams, the ratio of adult trainers to participants and the trainers' competencies are all covered within Scouting. This makes it easier to agree training practice and integrate the delivery of our pre-Ten Tors' activities and planned Ten Tors specific training programme.

Walkers need to be highly motivated, to have at least a basic level of fitness, and be ready to become resilient, committed team players who want to be part of the training programme.

Parental/carer support has to be developed beyond acquiring the necessary personal kit and transport to/from training venues. Helping parents/carers to understand the commitment expected of their child will ensure readiness to provide emotional support as training becomes more arduous.

Potential conflicts of commitment are usually best resolved early, preferably by the beginning of January; these may include academic issues, especially if critical exam dates fall immediately after the Ten Tors Challenge, sporting or family plans. If it's apparent that there are too few candidates to fill a team, the problem needs to be addressed with Ten

Tors organisers before 14<sup>th</sup> January to minimise the risk of an adverse impact on your team allocations in subsequent years

## Training Content

All of the requisite skills are covered – some in greater depth, others less intensively. The main headings are listed below – for full details see '*A Progressive Training Model*'

- Hill Walking skills
- Camp craft
- Ten Tors
- Environmental appreciation
- First Aid
- Fitness
- Kit-related issue
- Nutrition
- Ten Tors Rules – both the spirit and the letter, including
  - Out of bounds areas
  - River Crossings
  - Road and track access restrictions

## Training Practice

Whilst every would-be team member is expected to acquire these skills and the knowledge, two or three members in each team need to have a really good grasp of navigation, given the demands presented by Dartmoor.

Although most of the topics listed can be taught indoors, all need to be practised in the Hills. Outdoor training starts in more forgiving terrain before moving to the higher parts of Dartmoor or similar upland areas as experience develops and competency is demonstrated. Teams review their previous training events, identify what worked, as well as what didn't and plan how to avoid repeating any mistakes. Team leaders and deputies are identified either in the light of experience during training and/or their known strengths and weaknesses.

Training in teams of six works for us. Whilst it may be attractive to start the formal phase of Ten Tors training with many walkers, larger groups can be unwieldy and risk losing cohesion, especially in more challenging conditions. Whilst a spare walker or two per team may be prudent, too many can be unhelpful.

Some Establishments provide larger numbers with the outdoor skills and wild country experience. (The Ten Tors Rules permit up to 12 per team to train on the North Moor). Holding a mini event celebrates the success of the participants before the difficult task of selecting the teams to participate in the Ten Tors Challenge.

Teams need to understand pace, time, distance and Saturday night stop times and Sunday crash times. The Event starts at 0700 on Saturday and finishes at 1700 on Sunday, but doesn't necessarily offer 34 hours of 'walking time' in which to complete the respective distances. No team, at any distance, will be checked through the eight Tor on their route, as shown on the Control Card; this Tor falls near the three quarter point on all routes.

In practice, the 35 mile teams may have less than 11 hours on Saturday, as they have to allow for the impact of the 'Night Stop Time' on their route. On Sunday they'll have up to 11 hours available, assuming that they leave their overnight stop promptly at 0600.

On the Saturday evening, if they wish, 45 and 55 mile teams may choose to continue walking beyond 2000 but may not be checked through any Safety Control or check Point (including their eighth Tor) after 2200. As 45 and 55 mile teams may not campo within 1km of Safety Control or Check Point, they must plan accordingly if approaching a Safety Control or Check Point as 2200 nears.

Given the challenges of walking in wild country, building a contingency buffer of 2 or 3 hours into Ten Tors route planning will help to assure success. With the revised routes and rules, casualties can only fall out at one of the 10 Safety Controls. If a casualty is immobile, the team must stay with them – even if they're at check Point – pending the casualty's evacuation. Route plans should allow for such contingencies.

Many teams plan to complete in about 20 hours 'walking time', aiming to make about two thirds of their overall distance on the first day. A similar model can be used during overnight training so that the walkers become used to achieving two thirds/one third of the planned activity on the first and second days respectively.

Given a 'real world' total distance approaching 60km, 35 mile teams should be able to sustain 4km/hr for several hours after the start, gradually dropping to 3km/hr later in the day and continuing at the same speed on Sunday. Good planning with respect to the Saturday Night Times can be the key to success on 35 mile routes.

Subject to their stamina, 45 and 55 mile teams have a little more walking time available to them on the Saturday evening or prior to 0600 on Sunday morning, but they can't check through either Safety Controls or Checkpoints between 2200 on Saturday and 0600 on Sunday.

Teams need to tackle incrementally more demanding training routes and to become accustomed to completing their training routes successfully. For 35 mile teams, this will involve a transition from being accompanied, shadowed and finally being remotely supervised by their adult trainers as the team's skills, competence and confidence develop during training.

Dependent on the prevailing conditions, a shadowing or check pointing model of supervision will meet the needs of the suitably experienced teams.

Teams which are new to Ten Tors need close adult leader supervision initially to enable them to implement and develop their hill walking and back packing skills in a challenging yet safety environment. This is covered in depth in '*A Progressive Training Model*'.

Emergency Procedures must ensure that team safety is not mobile phone-dependent as they can't be used on the Event other than in a genuine emergency. However, 'phones can offer a useful added support during the check pointing phase of training but over dependence should be avoided ...

Mistakes during training are learning opportunities, focusing on the avoidance of repetition, with teams being supported in devising successful outcomes to the challenges encountered.

We aspire to a challenging but safe training regime, which emphasises the importance of all team members having the right clothing and equipment, and knowing when and how to deploy it. Detailed guidance is given in *Clothing and Equipment*.

Whilst Ten Tors training in the hills has the potential to be hazardous, the risk of accidents during homeward travel can be mitigated by ensuring the minibus drivers are fresh to drive by not having a significant role in the walking training programme

### **Training Event Leader**

A competent adult leader is designated as the Training Event Leader, in Scout parlance 'leader in charge', for every training event. They are tasked with the oversight of the activity as whole and its safety. All of the other leaders are

informed who is holding the role for each training event.

The Leader in Charge is responsible for

- ensuring that all of the adults leaders understand their own roles, and
- coordinating the response to any incident, deploying resources and manpower as required, and
- determining the progress of the event in the light of changing circumstances

### **Confirming attainment of the Rule 47 team 'Qualifying Requirements Declaration'**

All Team Managers have to sign a Qualifying Requirements Declaration for each of their teams on behalf of the 'Head of Establishment', confirming that the team members have qualified for Ten Tor. This explicitly requires teams to have experienced a structured and progressive programme of training together, including team experience of independent walking and wild camping on Dartmoor. In addition, the team must be sufficiently trained, physically prepared and suitably equipped to self-sufficient and safe, and to complete the Challenge unaided, even in adverse conditions.

Both Teignbridge and Gordano are content to sign our teams' Declarations, knowing that our training programmes are compliant with the Ten Tors Qualifying Requirements.

### **Legacy**

The skills learned on Ten Tors provide a really good grounding for lifelong adventure – including the development of expeditioning and leadership opportunities. Our ex-55 milers are valued highly – they're our 'seed corn' – potentially our next generation of capable, qualified inspirational leaders. This is reflected via developmental opportunities including early access to formal

hillwalking and mountain leader training programmes.

### **After Thought**

The training practice described above works well for us. Much of what we do will be familiar to many experience team staff. Please feel free to utilise and adapt any of our ideas and methods to suit your own training operation. Whilst we aspire to run successful training Ten Tors operations, our ideas should not be read as definitive guidance.