

AZRA

GRAND CANYON RAFTING

8 WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM AZRA GRAND CANYON RAFTING ADVENTURE



Disclaimer: By providing you with this tool for preparing for your Grand Canyon trip, AzRA makes no promises or representations regarding the safety, appropriateness, or efficacy of the program. The decision to utilize this program or not to utilize this program is yours and yours alone, and you assume all risk and responsibility associated with that decision. Consult with a physician before starting any fitness routine.



Created by Somer Morris-AzRA Guide & Personal Trainer pursuing her Doctorate of Physical Therapy

Somer guided for many years for AzRA, and still sneaks on a trip here and there. One of the regrets Somer most often heard on the river is that people wished they had done this trip when they were younger, before their back, knees, shoulders, etc. gave out. No doubt, a trip through Grand Canyon is an intense, physical experience but that doesn't have to be a limiting factor in how much you get out of the journey. Some consistent physical preparation can go a long way in helping you feel strong and ready for the adventure.

An eight-week program

This 8 week program is designed to be completed before your trip launch date. If you can't get all 8 weeks in before you leave, do what you can. Doing at least some of this rather than none of it, will help you be more physically prepared than you would have been without any added exercise. It is our hope that the training you do for your Grand Canyon rafting adventure will not only boost your experience on the river, but will also help you feel stronger and more resilient in day-to-day life!

Grand Canyon is a special place. We want this program to be fun and get you feeling pumped up for the adventure that is Grand Canyon. If you fall out of the boat so to speak, it's okay! Just get back in as soon as you can, and keep paddling. There is a daily checklist at the bottom of this program to help you track your progress as you count down the days until your launch. Enjoy and have fun!



Step 1: Sit to Stand Test

This test will give you a good baseline of where you're starting. It provides an objective, measurable way to see how your efforts pay off when you retest after a period of training. The sit to stand test is very simple—it involves scoring how much effort it takes to get down to, and then back up off the ground. It's quick to perform and provides a composite measure of strength and mobility. It is also practical and highly relevant for a trip down the Colorado.

On the river, you'll have chairs in camp, but there are some places where they're not practical to set up. The chairs can't be unloaded during the day so at lunch and on day stops, you will likely find yourself settling into the soft sand, which is a great opportunity to get a feel for the place.

To perform test, you will need:

- Bare feet and clothes that won't restrict movement
 - A soft, non-slip surface—carpet, grass, an exercise mat, etc.
1. Lower yourself down to a seated position on the ground using as few ground contact points as possible (knee, shin, hand, elbow, etc.)
 2. Return to standing, minimizing ground contact.
 3. Score yourself out of a total of 10 points:
 - a. Give yourself 5 points for getting down to the ground
 - b. Give yourself 5 points for getting back up
 - c. Subtract one point for every point of ground contact you made

Do this test before beginning the program, then repeat at the end of the training program, so you can see your progress.

As with any fitness test, remember this is not a judgement on you or your character; it's simply a measuring tool. If this test is beyond your current capacity and/or doesn't feel safe for your body, use this alternative test.

Step 2: Understand the Training Program

This program has three components: daily movement, cardio, and strength training.

Daily movement: The idea behind this component is to get in the habit of moving, even if it's just a little bit, EVERY day. This only needs to be 20 minutes and almost anything counts as long as you are moving, consistently for the full 20 minutes. Go for a walk, stretch, dance, do yoga, play pickleball, however you enjoy moving your body. The cardio and strength components count toward this on the days you do them. Don't feel like you have to stop at 20 minutes, but it's a good target if you are not already in the habit of moving daily.

Cardio: Plan on getting in at least 2 sessions of focused cardio training a week. Sessions should include a warm up and cool down and at least 20 minutes of work in an elevated heart rate zone. A good gauge of intensity would be to find a level where you are slightly breathless and breaking a sweat but could still carry on a conversation. I recommend choosing 2 of the cardio workouts listed below a week, but if there are other ways you enjoy getting your heart rate up, do that!

Strength training: This part of the program is designed to build a solid base of full body strength, endurance, improved balance, as well as help you practice getting on and off the ground. This workout is built as a circuit, which means you'll move from one exercise to the next. This part of the program should be done at least 2 times a week, but not more than 3. Strength days should not be done back to back. Mix it up with cardio or another form of movement.

Step 3: Follow this Calendar & Keep Track

	Daily Movement - 20 min							Cardio		Strength	
	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	1	2	1	2
	Sample Week:	cardio 1	strength 1	20 min yoga	cardio 2	Strength 2	hike	easy walk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Week 1								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 3								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 4								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 5								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 7								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 8								<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Write in your daily movement activity for each day of the week and check off the boxes when you get in your 2 days of cardio and 2 days of strength to stay on track. Be sure to include a couple days of active recovery - get the movement in but lower the intensity. Miss a day? No sweat! Just get back after it tomorrow.

Suggested Cardio Workouts

	Weeks 1-2	Weeks 3-4	Weeks 5-6	Weeks 7-8
<p>Cardio Day 1: Brisk walk for a time. Can be done outside, on a trail or track, treadmill, etc. *Tip: use the daypack and hiking shoes you'll be using for the trip to make sure they're good and comfortable</p>	30 min	45 min	60 min	60+ min
<p>Cardio Day 2: Staircase Intervals. Find a staircase ideally more than 10 consecutive steps. Ascend/descent the full set of stairs as many as you can within the working interval period and then stop and recover for the rest interval. This is more high intensity than Day 1. Recover during the rest period, but you should still have an elevated heart rate.</p>	<p>Work 45-60 sec</p> <p>Rest 2 min</p> <p>Complete 10 work/rest cycles</p>	<p>Work 60 sec</p> <p>Rest 90 seconds</p> <p>Complete 10-12 work/rest cycles</p>	<p>Work 75 seconds</p> <p>Rest: 75 seconds</p> <p>Complete 10-12 cycles</p>	<p>Work 90 seconds</p> <p>Rest 60 seconds</p> <p>Complete 10-12 cycles</p> <p>*Tip: Throw on hiking pack with 10-20 pounds of weight here</p>

Strength Training

The circuit below is set up to work on one-minute intervals and includes some built-in rest. There are 5 total sets. Each set consists of 3 exercises that should be done for 1 minute each before switching to the next exercise in the set. The last minute of each set is a rest period before moving onto the next.

The first set is a warm up and should be completed at lower intensity

Sets 1-4 are the strength sets and should be done at an intensity level where you are sweating and breathing hard but at a level you can sustain for the whole minute of work. Slow down to find that working pace. If you need to pause and catch your breath between reps, that's OK! Just try to get back into it and keep going.

You may be tempted to do the exercises out of order but the program is designed to build in some practice getting up and down off the ground, so do them in the order listed for best results.

The final set is the cool down that simply involves walking around casually 2-3 minutes to slow your heart rate and then 1 minute of box breathing to calm your nervous system back down.

For the first 1-4 weeks, focus on working up to a steady pace that you can sustain for the full minute. Once you have that down, there are 2 options for increasing the intensity: you can try to do as many repetitions as possible for each exercise in the minute, or you can do 2 rounds of sets 2-4. I have set up online interval timers for the single round (level 1) and the double round (level 2). You can also use a watch/stopwatch/cell phone timer.

LEVEL 1 Interval Timer

LEVEL 2 Interval Timer

<p>Warm up set</p>	<p><u>Easy step up</u> Alternate leading leg up and down</p> 	<p><u>Cat cows</u></p> 	<p><u>Up/down</u> Practice getting up/down from the floor</p> 	<p>Rest 1 min</p>
<p>Set 1</p>	<p><u>Air Squats</u> As many as you can in 1 min</p> 	<p><u>Push ups</u> Can be on knees!</p> 	<p><u>Step ups-moderate intensity</u> Alternate leading leg up and down</p> 	<p>Rest 1 min</p>
<p>Set 2</p>	<p><u>Glute Bridge</u> Keep hips high, squeeze butt, hold for 5 sec, then lower</p> 	<p><u>Towel Row</u> Wrap towel around fixed object</p> 	<p><u>Plank Hold</u> Keep leg & butt muscles active</p> 	<p>Rest 1 min</p>

If you need instruction on any of these moves, click on the title (ex: "Air Squats") and it'll pull up a short video demonstration.

<p>Set 3</p>	<p><u>Calf Raise</u> Lower heels off the edge of step and then raise up on toes</p> 	<p><u>Russian Twist</u> Feet can anchor on floor to make easier</p> 	<p><u>Walking Lunges</u> Keep upper body tall & alternate legs</p> 	<p>Rest 1 min</p>
<p>Set 4</p>	<p><u>Hamstring walk-out</u> Starting from glute bridge, walk each heel a few inches out at a time as far as you can, then walk back in</p> 	<p><u>Single Leg Balance</u> 30 sec standing on each leg</p> 	<p><u>Superman</u> Hold position for as much of the minute as you can</p> 	<p>Rest 1 min</p>
<p>Cool Down Set</p>	<p>Easy walk Go outside, walk up and down the hall</p>	<p>Keep Walking Focus on slowing down your breath as you slow down your movement</p>	<p>Box Breathing Find a comfortable place to stand or sit. Inhale, hold, exhale, hold each for a count of 4</p>	<p>Done. Nice work!</p>

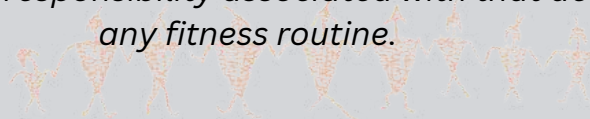
Parting words & thoughts

We are super excited for you to see and experience Grand Canyon! It's a very special place. We hope this program is fun and gets you feeling pumped up for the adventure. The key to success is consistency and persistence. If something comes up and you need to stop for a bit, that's okay. Just start back up again.

The more fit you are for your adventure, and the more you physically prepare for it, the more you'll enjoy your rafting trip. Start the countdown to your trip now, and have fun getting prepared!



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