



NZSAS SELECTION

Prepare, Visualise, Dare

Preparing and visualising for the SAS selection has parallels with preparation for endurance sports.

As the November SAS selection approaches some NZSAS personnel wanted to share an article featured in *NZ Hunter*, by Mr Joseph Peter, which has some useful ideas to help properly prepare. We have republished aspects of that article with permission from the author. Here Joseph offers some practical advice on how to prepare for the adverse conditions faced in mountain hunting, which has some cross-over to the type of conditions that may be encountered on SAS selection. As you read it consider it part of your mental preparation and visualisation for what success might look like for you.

..... Preparing for your Mountain Hunt: Part II

**By Joseph Peter
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Being a successful mountain hunter can mean a lot of things but generally you'll need the right gear, some shooting skills and be in good physical and mental state. When all these factors are combined, things will seem easier and you'll have success no matter how your hunt pans out.

Fitness

Training to hunt has become a craze across North America and it's great to see people putting considerable effort into their training. Like most guides, I am in a position where I generally don't need to train because I'm hunting often and keep fit that way (well, I try too). One of the biggest things I see people miss with their training is 'real world stuff.' This is difficult for those who live in areas with no hills/mountains, but I would suggest getting out with a pack on

your back into the hills as much as possible, even if it means driving a long way to get there.

'Hill fit' is very different to 'gym fit.' This is noticeable in people who hunt a lot. There are those out there who don't look particularly fit but will kick-ass on the mountain because that's what they do regularly and there are also those guys/gals who look very fit but struggle in the mountains.

Remember that mountain hunting is an endurance sport, not a strength or power sport and this should reflect how you train. Being fit will not only make your hunt easier physically, it also greatly reduces the chance of injury and you will be able to make better calls in the hills. Being tired and worn out impacts your mental judgement.

Walking in the mountains, just like everything else, is a skill. The only way to get better at walking is to walk - funny that! Not on a treadmill or Stairmaster, track, game trail or path. Get out into the rough country with a light pack, this is the best value training you can do in my opinion. The biggest factor I see hunters struggle with is moving quickly and safely through

difficult terrain. I see many hunters waste a LOT of energy with the way they move and fall over all the time, which is very sapping both on mind and body. How many times have you seen a wild animal fall over?

It's difficult to explain how to walk in rough terrain. I feel it is something that must be learnt and after a while it just becomes automatic, you don't even have to think of where to place your feet. Always try to be two steps ahead, that is, you need to know where your next two steps are going before you get there.

Being able to move efficiently though the mountain is far more important than how much you can bench press. Trust me, I am a strong believer in total weight - that's you plus your pack. Counting ounces has become a big trend but body weight is one of the most crucial factors. On a recent hunt with a friend, we worked out that my total weight (me, gear, pack, rifle, etc) was less than my hunting partner's base body weight. He is not overweight by any means, just a bigger person than me. On unstable terrain, loose rocks etc I had a massive advantage because of this.

Most guys who walk a lot are small (makes sense – look at trail runners/ multi-sport endurance athletes etc). The smaller you are, the less food you generally need to keep going on a 10-day hunt, and that means a lighter pack. I'm not suggesting anyone goes on some crazy weight-loss diet but it's something worth considering before you spend \$5k to lose 5 ounces off your rifle when you might have an extra 5lbs on your waist.

At the end of the day, any training is better than none and a little can go a long way to make your hunt easier on yourself and more successful. Fitness is only one factor towards being a successful mountain hunter, however don't forget to put some time into all other aspects as they can be equally as important.

Mental Attitude

A hunter's mental toughness or attitude is by far the biggest factor in enjoyment and success on the mountain. Mountain hunting pushes you physically and mentally harder than nearly any other activity in the world. How will you behave when you miss a 100 yard shot? How will you feel when it rains for five days straight? When you fall in a river and all your gear gets wet? When you twist your ankle on the first day? When you can't walk out but camp is three hours away?

These are all things that can and do happen and it is how you react when things don't go to plan that decides whether your hunt is enjoyable or not. And rarely does it all go to plan.

I've seen hunters come away from a hunt feeling unhappy despite taking multiple record-book animals and I've also seen hunters who've had one the best times of their lives



at the end of a hunt where they didn't fire a shot. This all comes down to expectation and attitude.

Mental toughness cannot be bought or trained. There is no easy, quick-fix 20 day money back plan to being mountain tough! It must be earned the hard way. I have guided plenty of people who were not fit or well prepared physically for the hills but they had the right mental attitude. These guys will out-walk a fit young hunter who has not had a hard day on the hill every time. The human mind is an amazing thing, always remember that the body does what the mind tells it to. If you can't walk anymore then you won't be able to. If you tell yourself you're just warming up, who knows how far you can walk!

For those starting out, I would recommend doing some hard yards, so to speak. Spend a night out in the bush with no gear. Do a day's walk without food. When that big storm comes through get out amongst it and test your gear and yourself. Obviously, I don't want anyone to go out and hurt themselves, so test these things in a controlled manner and have someone supervise/keep track of you. This is where you should be combining your physical fitness and mental training. The harder your training is mentally and physically the easier your hunt will be.

Make a Goal

Success means a lot of different things to different people and

setting out what you want to achieve from a hunt before you start is very important. Setting an achievable goal will make the planning process much easier. Without a clear goal in mind you will find yourself just wandering around in the mountains not knowing what you want to do.

Hopefully this gives you guys some insight into how to be better prepared for the challenges of a mountain hunt. At the end of the day a hunt is what you make it. Go out with a positive attitude, be safe and have a good time!

<http://hardyardshunting.co.nz>

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SAS Selection is about three months away. With the right preparation and self-belief it is a very achievable course. Beyond that, for successful candidates, remains ten-months of world-class and challenging training; followed by a career as an operator in an internationally renowned Special Forces unit. This is a career that gives successful candidates the opportunity to protect our national interests, help people and solve hard problems. Do you dare?



**Next SAS Selection – November 2019
 Nominations open 15 July – October 2019**

NZSAS SELECTION

The next selection for the New Zealand Special Air Service is in November 2019. New Zealand Special Operations Forces have an important role within the NZDF. We must deliver precise results in sensitive, complex and difficult environments. Our people are innovative and agile.

We are looking for ordinary New Zealanders that are humble, disciplined, brook no sense of class and are committed to pursuing excellence.

We need people who work well in a small team and can make decisions in complex situations.

The Special Air Service selection course is open to men and women from the NZDF and direct entry candidates from other departments and the civilian workforce.

The next selection is from 18 November to 3 December 2019. Nominations open 15 July 2019 and close 15 October 2019.

Visit <http://org/nzsof/LP/Recruiting.aspx> for more information and to download your application.

