

Role of Personal Fitness

A hunter must be physically able to hunt responsibly. This may mean walking for a number of days while hunting for a game animal. It may also mean difficult climbs up a mountain each day. Hunting in Alaska may mean walking through muskegs, dense alder thickets and crossing creeks. Even after all the hard work of finding an animal, experienced Alaskan hunters will say that the work really begins when an animal is killed.

If you are a successful moose hunter you will have to pack out all the edible meat. One hindquarter of a mature bull moose may weigh 125-pounds or more. All of the edible meat may weigh over 500-pounds. Every pound must be carried out of the field. In some areas of Alaska you may be able to use off-road vehicles to help you carry the meat back to camp. In many prime hunting areas vehicle use is not allowed during hunting season, leaving you to pack the animal out on your back.

Even if you are lucky and find an animal within a mile of camp there is a lot of work involved in hunting, cleaning and packing out that animal. The ground that you must walk over will likely be uneven, soft or covered with dense brush.

You should begin your conditioning at least four to six months before your hunt. Thirty minutes a day of jogging, bicycling, swimming, or weight lifting can help you prepare for hunting. The best exercise is simply placing a pack on your back and hiking. If you are going to hunt in the mountains and there are no mountains near you, then put on your pack and walk up stairs or stadium steps. For conditioning, start packing weight loads approximately one-tenth your body weight and increase the amount to approximately one-fourth your body weight.

Your hunt will be far more enjoyable if you are physically up to the challenge. Talk to your doctor, physical trainer or an athletic coach for help in making a specific plan to prepare yourself for your hunt.

