

Grand Canyon Training – A Body 2 Fit Testimonial

I had planned a trip to the United States for December of 2007 with my 11 year old daughter. One of the highlights of our trip was to be a hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. I researched the hike and was reasonably confident that we would make the 10 km trip down and 16 km return hike but I knew that the fitter we were, the more we would be able to enjoy the scenery.

So, about 8 weeks out from our departure I contacted Jenny Barlow and asked for her advice. I found out that Jenny had hiked the Grand Canyon (to the bottom and back in one day) so she knew what to expect. She also had a “no-nonsense” manner about her and focussed on what she could do for us to get us prepared in a relatively short timeframe.

We started one session a week with some strength and endurance training and some steps (for those that haven't been to the Grand Canyon, the majority of the main trails are stepped – very hard on the legs going down!). Jenny set us homework which was fairly intense given what we were trying to achieve and encouraged us to do our best to get it done.

When we arrived at the Grand Canyon it was covered in snow and ice covered probably about the first 2 km of the descent. It took us about 8 hours to hike to the bottom during which time we passed a few hikers that were really struggling with the unrelenting downhill steps. We arrived at Phantom Ranch (at the bottom of the Canyon) in pretty good condition and were asked by many of the hikers what we had done to prepare ourselves for the hike (as we were feeling pretty good and they were wishing they'd done some training). We enjoyed telling the story about Jenny and her insistence that we trained on steps.

The hike out surprisingly was easier than the descent and we managed it in about 10 hours, taking our time to enjoy the scenery and talking to the many hikers that we met along the way – some of whom were concerned about making it out.

The picture below was taken just over half way up and, as you can see, we weren't looking too exhausted.



Here we are back at the top after our 10 hour hike:



I'm so pleased that we went to Jenny before we attempted this hike and I would recommend her to anyone wanting to train for an event.

Karen and Emma Andrews