

IRONHIKE

Amicalola Falls State Park — Dawsonville, GA

12-Week Beginner Training Plan

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Targets: Kuwohi (12-hour), Double Kuwohi (24-hour)

12-Week Beginner Training Plan

Target Events: Kuwohi (12-hour), Double Kuwohi (24-hour)

Weekly Cadence: 4 active days, 1 strength day, 2 rest days (lightens up periodically for recovery)

Core Strategy: IronHike is an elevation-based endurance series — your event is measured in feet of climbing, not just miles, so this plan is built around vertical gain first. Steady-state hiking, stair climbing, or running with progressive lap volume on the Amicalola staircase loop (1.5 mi / 604 ft per lap), building total elevation gain week over week toward race day, with lighter recovery weeks built in along the way. Every session can be hiked, run, or a mix of both — use whichever lets you sustain the prescribed time or distance, but prioritize the climbing.

Training Away From the Venue

You don't need to be at Amicalola Falls to run this plan. Find a stair system near you — stadium or high school bleachers, a parking garage stairwell, a tall office building's fire stairs, or a long outdoor staircase all work. Each "lap" in this plan targets about 604 ft of climbing (roughly 604 steps) over about 1.5 mi of total distance; find a local stair set of a similar size and repeat it (up and down, or up-and-walk-down) the number of times listed to hit the day's total. If your local stairs are shorter, just add more reps to match the total elevation gain.

WEEK 1

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	40 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 25 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	45 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	40 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 2 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 3 mi equivalent / 1,208 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	45 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 2

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	45 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	50 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	45 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 3 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 4.5 mi equivalent / 1,812 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	50 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 3

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	50 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	55 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	50 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 4 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 6 mi equivalent / 2,416 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	55 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 4

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	35 min easy hike, light stair climbing, or jog + 20 min light bodyweight circuit (squats, lunges, calf raises) — keep effort conversational.
Wednesday	40 min easy walk or jog.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	30 min easy hike or jog.
Saturday	Long Day: 2 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 3 mi equivalent / 1,208 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	40 min easy recovery walk or jog.

WEEK 5

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	40 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 25 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	45 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	40 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 3 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 4.5 mi equivalent / 1,812 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	45 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 6

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	45 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	50 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	45 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 4 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 6 mi equivalent / 2,416 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	50 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 7

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	50 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	55 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	50 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 5 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 7.5 mi equivalent / 3,020 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	55 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 8

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	35 min easy hike, light stair climbing, or jog + 20 min light bodyweight circuit (squats, lunges, calf raises) — keep effort conversational.
Wednesday	40 min easy walk or jog.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	30 min easy hike or jog.
Saturday	Long Day: 2 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 3 mi equivalent / 1,208 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	40 min easy recovery walk or jog.

WEEK 9

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	40 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 25 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	45 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	40 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 5 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 7.5 mi equivalent / 3,020 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	45 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 10

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	45 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	50 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	45 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 6 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 9 mi equivalent / 3,624 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	50 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 11

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	50 min low-intensity hike, stair climbing, or easy run + 30 min bodyweight circuit (squats, walking lunges, step-ups on a curb or stair, calf raises, push-ups, plank hold).
Wednesday	55 min brisk walk or easy run on hilly or stepped terrain.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	50 min low-intensity hike or easy run.
Saturday	Long Day: 7 sets on local stairs (aim for about 604 ft / 604 steps per set — similar to the Amicalola staircase), totaling roughly 10.5 mi equivalent / 4,228 ft, continuous — hike, run, or a mix of both. Focus on pacing and gear.
Sunday	55 min recovery walk or easy jog on flat, easy terrain.

WEEK 12

Day	Activity / Workout Details
Monday	Rest & active recovery.
Tuesday	30 min easy walk or light jog, legs only.
Wednesday	25 min easy walk or light jog.
Thursday	Rest.
Friday	20 min shakeout walk or jog. Review gear list and race-day plan.
Saturday	Shakeout: 1 easy set on local stairs (about 604 ft / 604 steps, or your usual training stairs), relaxed pace. This is a gear and movement check, not a training stimulus — save your legs for race day.
Sunday	Rest. Hydrate, eat well, and finalize event-day logistics.

Joining the Plan Late?

This plan builds volume progressively over 12 weeks, with lighter recovery weeks built in periodically and an easy final week heading into race day. If your event is closer than 12 weeks away, don't try to cram earlier weeks in — join at the week below that matches your timeline.

Weeks until your event	Start at
12+ weeks out	Week 1 — begin the full plan
8–11 weeks out	Week 3 — skip the earliest low-volume weeks
5–7 weeks out	Week 6 — join mid-plan
3–4 weeks out	Week 9 — join the final push directly
1–2 weeks out	Week 12 only — do not attempt to compress earlier weeks into your final week

Note: Compressing multiple weeks of training into a shorter window increases injury risk rather than improving fitness. When in doubt, join later at a lower relative volume rather than skipping ahead into a week your body hasn't built toward.

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Consult Your Physician: Before beginning this or any exercise, training, or nutrition program, consult your physician or a qualified healthcare provider — particularly if you have any pre-existing medical condition, injury, cardiovascular concern, or any other health issue that could affect your ability to safely participate in strenuous physical activity, including sustained multi-hour or multi-day exertion, altitude or elevation exposure, extreme heat or cold, or sleep deprivation.

Assumption of Risk: Endurance training and participation in IronHike events carry inherent risks, including but not limited to physical injury, illness, dehydration, exhaustion, cardiac events, and death. By using these training plans, you voluntarily assume all such risks and acknowledge that you are solely responsible for determining whether you are medically fit to undertake them.

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Stop Immediately If: You experience chest pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, severe joint or muscle pain, disorientation, or any other concerning symptom during training. Seek medical attention right away.

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