

# Carey Kish: It's time to step up to the 1,000-mile challenge

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About a year ago, a good friend of mine from London, a fellow trekker I'd met a while back on the Tour du Mont Blanc, gave me a gift subscription to Country Walking magazine. Every beefy issue is chock full of great reading, and dozens of suggestions for hiking and walking all over Great Britain, a special place where I've logged many hundreds of wonderful miles.

An article in the February issue, "Take the 1,000-Mile Challenge," was particularly intriguing. In it the mag throws down the gauntlet – challenging readers to walk 1,000 miles over the course of the year – and then maps out a workable plan. By walking at lunchtime, at festivals, on weekends, at charity events and by tackling a few chunks of big trail, the folks at Country Walking say you really can make the miles add up over time.

## Additional Photos

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As part of a regimen for the 1,000-mile goal, include hiking time in Acadia National Park. With views like this, you'll be invigorated in both body and mind. Carey Kish Photo

Hmmm, I thought, that's a pretty cool idea. Hike essentially half the distance of the Appalachian Trail in bite-size pieces in a single year? All right, I'm game. Are you?

Consider the enormous health and fitness benefits of such a sustained challenge. Regular hiking and walking are proven to help decrease the risk of all kinds of nasty stuff, like coronary heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and colon and breast cancers. You'll lose weight, and reduce stress and anxiety levels. And you might just establish a new exercise pattern for years to come.

You can also track your progress with notes, photos and even a GPS to create a treasured record of the achievement.

Here's a sample plan, to be modified as needed:

Take a hike three days out of five during the week. Walk at lunchtime, before or after work. Do it for an hour to cover a little over three miles each time. Trundle along the same route or vary your forays. Total: 3 days a week x 3 1/2 miles x 48 weeks = roughly 500 miles.

Hike at least two weekends a month, more or less. Take a longer hike on Saturday, a mountain ramble of 10 miles perhaps, then go a little easier on Sunday with five miles along the coast. Total: 15 miles per weekend x 20 weekends = 300 miles.

Always wanted to tackle the renowned 100-Mile Wilderness? This is the year to do it. Plan for eight to 10 days to meander the distance along the Appalachian Trail from Monson to Abol Bridge. For bonus points and an additional 15 miles, continue your backpack trip north into Baxter State Park and climb Katahdin.

Acadia National Park boasts 120 miles of trails and some of the most scenic hiking anywhere, but how much of Mount Desert Island have you really seen? Spend two long holiday weekends there, pitching your tent at either Blackwoods or Seawall campgrounds. Knock off 25 miles of hiking each trip and you'll have certainly earned a few cold ones in Bar Harbor. Total: 2 holiday weekends x 25 miles each = 50 miles.

Never backpacked the Grafton Loop Trail? Well, you're in for a treat, but you'll certainly work for it over the course of your four-day trek through the rugged Mahoosuc Range. That's 40 miles.

Do all of the above and you'll have 990 total miles. Good enough, right? Not quite.

Pack your rucksack for a day's hike through the oft-wild urban environs of Portland on the Forest City Trail. Start at Stroudwater and finish at the Presumpscot River 10 miles later.

There you have it, 1,000 miles of walking in a year.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," advised the Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu

some 2,500 years ago.

OK, then – let's you and me get started.

*Carey Kish of Bowdoin is editor of the AMC Maine Mountain Guide. Follow Carey's outdoor adventures in his new Maineiac Outdoors blog at:*

*[mainetoday.com/blog/maineliac-outdoors](http://mainetoday.com/blog/maineliac-outdoors)*

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