



Physical Fitness

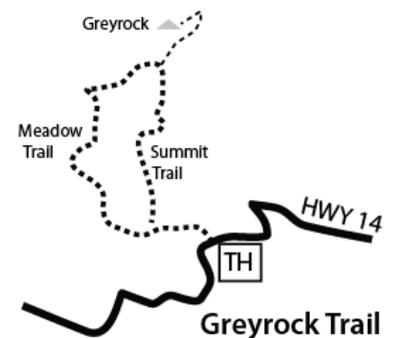
You don't have to be an athlete to be an effective LCSAR member, but it is important to be physically fit. Search and Rescue work is usually demanding—consider that people rarely get lost or injured on flat, gentle ground. Our missions often require hiking over rugged terrain in bad weather and during the night. In addition to your backpack (which will probably weigh around 25 pounds), you may also need to carry rope, medical supplies, or rescue gear.

A physical fitness test will be administered during the BASART training period. As a standard benchmark, you should be able to hike four miles over varied terrain with a minimum of 1,000 feet of elevation gain carrying a 25-pound pack within three hours. Not sure where you stand right now? Grab your gear and hit one of these free trails to test yourself:

Greyrock Loop – Northwest of Fort Collins

From Fort Collins, drive north on HWY 287 and turn west onto HWY 14 for the Poudre Canyon. Drive 8.5 miles to the trailhead on the left side of the road (the trail starts on the other side).

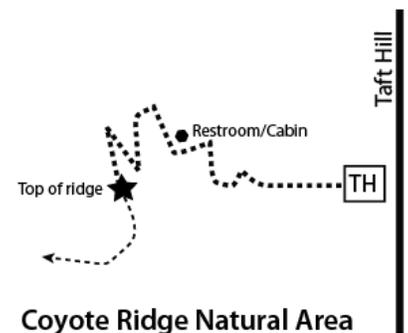
Route: This 6-mile loop climbs 1,870 feet to the base of the summit of Greyrock. From the trailhead, cross the Poudre River on a footbridge and hike less than a mile to a fork. Choose a path (the Meadow Trail or the Summit Trail) and hike uphill to the top of the loop; then follow the other path for the return trip. You should be able to complete this trek within 4 hours and 30 minutes with a loaded pack.



Coyote Ridge Natural Area – Between Fort Collins and Loveland

From Harmony and Taft Hill, drive south on Taft Hill for 3.5 miles to the trailhead on the west side of the road.

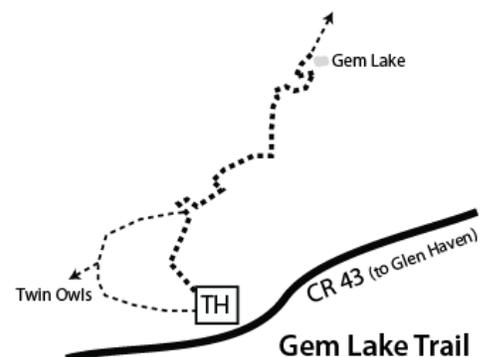
Route: This 4.2-mile hike (round trip) gains 540 feet of elevation as it climbs to the top of a hogback. From the trailhead, follow the closed road west for a mile to the restroom and interpretive cabin. Then continue along the hiking trail to reach the top of the ridge. Return to the trailhead to complete the hike. You should be able to complete this trek within 2 hours and 30 minutes with a loaded pack.



Gem Lake – Northeast of Estes Park

From Estes Park, drive north on CR 43 (Devil's Gulch Road) for 1.5 miles to the Gem Lake Trailhead.

Route: This 3.6-mile trail (round trip) in Rocky Mountain National Park climbs 1,100 feet to a small pool surrounded by rock cliffs. From the trailhead, take the Gem Lake Trail (not the Twin Owls Trail) and hike through a mix of pine, aspen, and large rocks. Return to the trailhead on the same trail. You should be able to complete this trek in less than 3 hours with a loaded pack.



*Although these routes are considered hikeable all year, you may encounter icy or snowy sections.