

Lupine Adventure Co-operative Mountain challenge briefing sheet #1 The Yorkshire Three Peaks



The Challenge:

The Yorkshire Three Peaks (Y3P) is a circular route that climbs the mountains of Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough and ends, about 24 miles later, back where it began. It is usually walked anti-clockwise starting and finishing in the village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale.

The target time is generally said to be twelve hours, although with any timescale it is still a challenge to be reckoned with. The record time is two hours and twenty nine minutes, set by Jeff Norman in 1974, on a slightly different route to that taken by walkers today.

Most walkers complete the route in between ten and thirteen hours. A few do it significantly faster (our record time with a group is 7 hours and 45 minutes) while plenty take longer. With adequate preparation this challenge is 'do-able' for most reasonably fit people. However, completing the route, regardless of time, is an achievement of which to be proud.



The Route:

The route is about 24 miles (39 km) in length - depending on who you ask and on the exact route taken -, and involves 5000 ft (1600 Metres) of vertical ascent. The terrain underfoot varies from tarmac to gentle grassy slopes to short sections of steep rocky scrambling.



Section 1.

Horton-in-Ribblesdale (OL2 80,72) to Pen-y-ghent Summit (838,734)

One kilometre of walking on a minor road, and 2 uphill on a straightforward path are followed by a short section on steep rocky ground to reach the summit of Pen-y-ghent, the first peak.

Section 2.

Pen-y-ghent to High Birkwith (803,772)

Six kilometres of undulating descent lead to High Birkwith. In the old days you could expect to get very muddy in the bogs of Red Moss, but as of 2012 the new footpath avoids all of this. As you descend off the side of Pen-y-ghent stick to the main path, avoiding the route taken by bog trotters of old. Head west on this path for about 3 km before joining the Pennine Way (heading North) for about another 2km. Then take a left at a sign post marked "Yorkshire 3 Peaks - High Birkwith".



Section 3.

High Birkwith to Road Crossing at Blea Moor Road (765,793).

Four kilometers of straightforward and fairly level walking by footpath, track and road. For those without vehicle support there is usually a snack van or 2 on route to provide a caffeine or calorie boost! Just off-route up the road is the Station Inn which allows use of its toilets in exchange for a donation to the charity pot.

Section 4.

Blea Moor Road to Whernside Summit (738,814)

This is a long but fairly steady uphill section, about 6 kilometres in length, with none of the rocky difficulties encountered on the route up Pen-y-ghent. The path passes the famous Ribbleshead Viaduct and then snakes its way up towards the summit, with one steep section below the summit ridge. Once you reach the ridge you are past the half-way point, both in terms of distance and time. From here it is a short walk along the ridge to the summit.



Section 5.

Whernside Summit to Low Sleights Road (742,776)

Shortly after summiting Whernside the route drops steeply downhill. This section is the most difficult and technical of the descents and can be quite a test for tired legs. It is followed by a less-steep path and then 800m or so on a more-or-less level track towards the road, and the final vehicle check point. Approximately four and a half kms in total.

Section 6.

Low Sleights Road to Ingleborough Summit (741,746)

A couple of hundred metres of road walking leads to the path towards Ingleborough. The path gains height gradually for about two kms before reaching a very steep section, comparable to that on Pen-y-ghent. A short uphill walk on less severe ground brings us to the summit plateau, at the far end of which is the summit itself. Four kilometers in total.



Section 7.

Ingleborough Summit to Horton-in-Ribblesdale

The route retraces its steps for a few hundred metres before branching off for the long descent towards Horton. There is about 7km still to cover, most of which is on reasonably good paths and at a friendly gradient. It is as well not to relax too soon however - the rocks are sometimes slippery and this section has been the scene of more than one mountain rescue call out in recent years. Finally the path arrives at Horton, where just a few hundred metres on tarmac remain to reach the finish line and a choice of 2 pubs and a cafe at which to celebrate!

Essential Skills and Equipment:

The Yorkshire Three Peaks are the scene of several mountain rescue incidents each year. It is essential that any group venturing into the mountains is properly equipped, competent in the use of a map and compass, and has an understanding of emergency procedures such as calling for help from mountain rescue organisations.

If you are employing a Mountain Leader(s) then they will be able to advise you on this and take care of much of it for you.

Equipment should generally include:

Waterproofs, synthetic clothing including a spare layer, appropriate footwear, hat and gloves, map and compass, torch and spare batteries, food and spare food, first aid kit, survival bag or similar and mobile phone. It may also be deemed desirable for the group to have a group shelter. Please note that at times snow and ice might make specialist winter kit and skills necessary.

It should be borne in mind that the amount of food and water that needs to be consumed on a day like this will be far in excess of a normal day. Depending on the time of year, and of day, it may be possible to restock at some points along the route, but it is essential that you have adequate food and water. High-energy and easy to eat foods are ideal, for example, flapjack, dried fruit and cereal bars.

Training:

The need for prior training for events like this varies from individual to individual. A good general rule is that if you are not sure whether or not you need to do specific training for this event, then you probably do. There is no substitute for getting out walking in the countryside, and the more similar the terrain the better. Trips to the hills can be supplemented with jogging or other aerobic exercise. If you live in a city or a very flat area, then you can benefit from incorporating steps, woodland, coast line and so on into your routes. Even flights of stairs can be of great benefit!

If necessary consult your doctor beforehand.



Points of Interest En-route:

For those that have the energy or inclination to appreciate such things, there is a wealth of interest along the route.

Ribblehead Viaduct has already been mentioned and at this point on Blea Moor there are also the remains of the work camp that existed to build the line.

On the approach to Ingleborough the route goes through a large area of Limestone Pavement, designated a SSSI owing to its geological and botanical importance.

Ingleborough Summit itself was (arguably) the site of a Bronze Age hill fort, the remains of which are visible around the edge of the plateau, and later was allegedly the site of roman chariot races!

Various museums and books give further information on these and other subjects. Details can be found at the tourist information centre at the Penyghent Cafe in Horton-In-Ribblesdale.



Environmental Concerns:

With the large numbers of people attempting this challenge, it is more important than ever to observe good practice while in the hills.

- Stick to the path to minimise erosion.
- Cross walls and fences only where there is a stile or a gate.
- Leave no litter (including all food waste). Even better, if you see litter pick it up.
- Leave gates as you find them. Close gates without slamming them.
- Do not allow dogs to chase sheep or wildlife. Keep them on a short lead in areas of Access Land between March 1st and July 31st.
- Keep noise to a minimum, especially when close to houses or other people, late at night or early in the morning.

The Area:

Horton has a large car park in the centre of the village. There are also public toilets here. The train station is just a few hundred metres up the road and is on the Settle-Carlisle line with a few direct trains from Leeds each day. There are 2 pubs in the village and 2 cafes, one of which, the Penyghent Cafe, doubles as a shop and Tourist Info centre, and is the official start and finish point for anyone wanting to join 'The 3 Peaks of Yorkshire Club'. It has an antique ticket machine at which you clock in and out in order for your time to be measured.

Further pubs are to be found where the route crosses the roads at Ribbleshead and Chapel-le-Dale. The farm buildings on Philpin Lane at Chapel-le-Dale include a small cafe which is open on Saturdays, and refreshments can also be bought at snack vans on the road near Ribbleshead.

Places to stay:

3 Peaks Bunkroom - Dormitory accommodation in the centre of Horton.
www.3peaksbunkroom.co.uk

Dub Cote Bunkhouse Barn - Bunk accommodation just outside the village.
01729 860238

Holme Farm campsite - Right in the centre of the village. Can get very busy.
01729 860 281

Cragg Hill Farm Site - A basic, quiet, campsite on the edge of Horton - 01729 860266

Golden Lion - Hotel, bunk barn and camping in the centre of Horton.
www.goldenlionhotel.co.uk

The Crown - Hotel accommodation in the centre of Horton.
www.crown-hotel.co.uk

Women's Holiday Centre - Women-only accommodation in the centre of the village.
www.hortonwhc.org.uk

Helwith Bridge Campsite - Basic campsite less than 2 miles from Horton.
01729 860422

Station Inn. Hotel rooms and bunk rooms 5 miles from Horton. The station Inn is on the Y3P route.
www.thestationinn.net

Knight Stainforth Campsite - Deluxe campsite 4 miles from Horton
www.knightstainforth.co.uk

Old Hill Inn - Pub with accommodation, 6.5 miles from Horton and on the route of the Y3P
www.oldhillinn.co.uk



Finish your event with tea and medals

Surprise your friends with a medal each to congratulate them on their success.

£5 +P&P each - all profit going to the Friends of the 3 peaks

Get in touch at www.lupineadventure.co.uk for details

Yorkshire Three Peaks Code of Conduct



The Yorkshire Three Peaks is part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park - a very special place.

The Three Peaks has become an increasingly popular location for fundraising events. **YOU** can help us keep the area special for everyone to enjoy by following the Yorkshire Three Peaks Code of Conduct:

Parking is Limited



- Keep vehicles to a minimum, use local transport to get here or car share where possible.
- Please park considerately and do not obstruct passing places, clearways, private roads, tracks, roadside verges, gateways or pavements.

Be Quiet!



- **Please keep noise to a minimum.** Respect the peace of people living and staying in the area.
- Keep early morning noise (from both people and vehicles) to an absolute minimum and maintain it until you are away from the village.
- Do not use bells or claxons to 'ring home' your participants at the end of their challenge.

Leave No Trace



Litter...

- **Take it home!** Litter places a burden on our small, rural communities and is a blight on the landscape. If you really want to help, pick up any odd bits you see along the way.
- **Remember**, banana skins and orange peel are litter, too – they are unsightly and take years to decompose.

Toilets...



- **Don't get caught short!** Toilet facilities on the Three Peaks route are limited (the only public toilets are at Horton-in-Ribblesdale).
- **Do not** use the mountains as an outdoor toilet. This has significant impact on local water supplies and ecology, and is unpleasant for other visitors. If you do need to urinate, do so at least 30m from streams and burns. If you need to defecate, do so as far away as possible from buildings, streams and farm animals. Bury faeces in a shallow hole and replace the turf.

Stay Safe



- **Be prepared!** Make sure you are well prepared in terms of kit and have a good level of fitness. Make sure you have at least one person in your group who can navigate in difficult conditions. Local mountain rescue teams are all volunteers and should only be called in an emergency.

Give Something Back



- **Support the local community** by using local facilities and services.
- **Donate to path maintenance.** Help us look after this special place by donating a minimum of £1 per walker - visit www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/threepaks

Enjoy yourself – but please respect those who live and work here. Come back and stay some time soon, linger, explore and enjoy the local hospitality, and get to know the place and the people.

Let's keep the Yorkshire Three Peaks special

Horton-in-Ribblesdale
Parish Council

