THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

Three iconic summits, 24 miles of walking, one stunning National Park

In association with
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THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE is a 24-mile circular walk that climbs Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough. The traditional approach is to climb all three hills inside 12 hours but those who don’t want to race against the clock can walk at a more leisurely pace!

WHAT IS THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE?

THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE was created in 1887 when local school teachers J.R. Wynne-Edwards and D.R. Smith set out one morning from the village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale with the aim of summiting Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough in a single walk. They returned 10 hours later, sparking a huge surge of interest in the challenge that continues to increase in popularity with each passing year.

HOW DID IT ALL START?

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WHAT ARE THE THREE PEAKS?

PEN-Y-GHENT  Height: 694m

Pen-y-ghent is the smallest of the Yorkshire Three Peaks but the most visually striking. Comprised of limestone, mudstone, siltstone and sandstone with a distinctive rocky crown that looms large over Horton-in-Ribblesdale, this is a hill that looks and feels like a mountain.

INGLEBOROUGH  Height: 723m

Ingleborough is the most well-known of the Yorkshire Three Peaks. It mixes the rocky excitement of Pen-y-Ghent with the height and bulk of Whernside to create a hill that offers a little bit of everything for walkers.

WHERNSIDE  Height: 736m

Whernside is the highest point of the challenge, and the highest point in the entire Yorkshire Dales National Park. Although not the most visually appealing of the Three Peaks, its sweeping summit offers one of the grandest viewpoints in England. On a clear day the views stretch to Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea.
HOW YOU CAN DO THE CHALLENGE

SELF-GUIDED
This is a tough challenge so only self-guide if you have experience of hill-walking and are able to navigate in all weather conditions.

GUIDED
For people who want to be led by a professional guide to ensure a safe, enjoyable and successful challenge.

DO IT FOR CHARITY
For people who want to raise money for charity and be with like-minded supporters.

3 PEAKS IN 12 HOURS
For people who want to take on the classic challenge and try to get round within the target time of 12 hours.

3 PEAKS OVER 2 DAYS
For people who want to chill out a bit and take on the challenge at a more leisurely pace, walking the 3 peaks over 2 days.

MAKING A WEEKEND OF IT
For people who want an easy life: a fully-organised weekend including professional guide, quality accommodation and great local food.

EXCLUSIVE GROUPS
For people who are organising a challenge for a private group on a date of your choice. We can help you with this - just fill in our help form.

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DOING THE THREE PEAKS FOR CHARITY

Doing **THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS** as a charity challenge means you can enjoy a great day on the hill and raise money for a good cause at the same time.

**CHARITY-ORGANISED CHALLENGES**
Some charities run fully organised Three Peaks challenges for you to join, where you don’t have to worry about organising any of the logistics.

**CHARITY OF YOUR CHOICE**
If you’d like to raise funds for your own charity, there are options for every group size and budget. Whether you’d like a fully-organised weekend challenge including accommodation and food, a local guide for a single day, or complete exclusivity for your group, we’ll help you find the right challenge.

**HOW MUCH SPONSORSHIP DO I NEED TO RAISE?**
This varies but is usually in the region of £300-£500. Those including accommodation and food will have a higher target than day-only walks. If you don’t like having to hit a target, opt to self-fund which means you simply raise as much as you can.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON’T RAISE THE MONEY?**
It’s easy to gauge whether you’re on track as the majority of your fundraising will be done online, and the organisers or charity will be there to help if you’re off target. You’ll usually be asked to submit most of the funds 10 weeks before your challenge, and you may have until after the challenge to submit the rest.

**VIEW THE CHALLENGES**

**STILL STUCK? GET IN TOUCH**

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You can start the Three Peaks Challenge at any point along the 24-mile route, but the traditional starting point is outside the Pen-y-Ghent café in Horton-in-Ribblesdale. The café opens at 9am and has a clock-card machine outside the front door, which allows you to stamp your start and finish time. If you finish inside 12 hours you’re invited to join the Three Peaks of Yorkshire Club.

The route is usually tackled anticlockwise, with Pen-y-ghent as the first peak, Whernside second and Ingleborough third.
1. Head south out of the village past the Golden Lion pub, then cross a stream and turn left up a tarmac road towards Brackenbottom. Take the footpath to your left signposted for Pen-y-ghent.

2. Follow the path uphill towards Pen-y-ghent, then turn left near the base of the peak to join the Pennine Way for a steep rocky climb to the summit trig point.

3. Cross the wall by the summit shelter then head north along the path before zigzagging down the hillside past Hunt Pot to a path junction.

4. Here you’ll carry on straight to join a new path over Whitber Hill. Turn right when you reach a clear track and follow it for a mile, then take the left path towards Birkwith Cave. When you reach a tarmac track, turn left then right on a rough track to Nether Lodge.

5. From Nether Lodge follow the access track to the B6479 and turn right on the road towards Ribblehead for around a mile, taking care of the traffic.

6. At the T-junction take a path towards Ribblehead viaduct, then follow the obvious path alongside the railway with the viaduct to your left.

7. After 1.5 miles you’ll cross the railway by an aqueduct and climb towards Grain Head. Take the signposted path to the left that climbs to the broad ridge, then follow it roughly south to Whernside’s summit.

8. The onward route follows the ridge for another mile before turning left and dropping to Bruntscar, where you’ll reach a lane that leads all the way to the B6255 road. Head left up the road to the Old Hill Inn, taking care as you cross, then right onto a path.

9. Pass through fields, a section of limestone pavement, then along a boardwalk before climbing from Humphrey Bottom.

10. In poor weather or low visibility it’s easy to leave Ingleborough’s summit in the wrong direction. If needed, from the trig point use a bearing of 070° until the ground starts to steepen, then follow a bearing of 100°.

11. From the summit head east on a gentle path back that drops towards your start point at Horton-in-Ribblesdale.
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?
That depends how fast you walk! If you’re taking on the traditional challenge, the aim is to complete the route inside 12 hours. That time should be achievable for most walkers, with a common finish time of around 9-10 hours. If you’d rather take time to enjoy each peak, you can choose to complete the challenge over multiple days.

HOW HARD IS IT?
It’s within the capabilities of all experienced walkers and hikers; but this is a long, tough walk with three significant ascents and descents. You’ll need good fitness, suitable gear and the ability to navigate in poor visibility on a wide variety of terrain.

SHOULD I HIRE A GUIDE?
If you’re an experienced walker, you shouldn’t need a guide as the route is well signposted and straightforward to navigate with competent map and compass skills. But if you don’t feel confident enough to tackle the route yourself, there are plenty of local guides to choose from.

WHAT MAPS DO I NEED?
The following maps cover the Yorkshire Three Peaks route at a variety of scales:

- Ordnance Survey Explorer, OL2 (1:25,000 scale)
- Ordnance Survey Landranger, 98 (1:50,000 scale)
- Harvey Maps Yorkshire Dales South West, Superwalker (1:25,000 scale)
- Harvey Maps Yorkshire Dales British, Mountain Map (1:40,000 scale)

We’d always recommend a printed map, but smartphone apps such as ViewRanger and OS Maps also allow you to download detailed maps and view your GPS position as you move.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO THE NATIONAL THREE PEAKS?
The National Three Peaks Challenge involves climbing the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales (Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon) as three separate walks. Most people attempt to complete the National Three Peaks inside 24 hours by driving between each mountain.
WHAT TIME OF YEAR SHOULD I DO IT?
The best time to attempt the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge is between April and September for the longer daylight hours and warmer temperatures.

WHAT WILL THE WEATHER BE LIKE?
May has the lowest average rainfall and highest sunshine hours. Weather in the Yorkshire Dales can be unpredictable so be prepared for cool temperatures, rain and high winds. In winter these peaks should be avoided by anyone without experience of hiking in snow and ice.

WHERE CAN I PARK?
There’s a car park in Horton (postcode: BD24 0HF, grid reference: SD 807 724) but get there early because it fills up quickly with cars and coaches.

CAN I GET THERE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT?
Horton train station is on the Settle to Carlisle line and is located in the village close to the start of the challenge. There’s also a train station at Ribblehead.

WHAT ABOUT TOILETS AND REFRESHMENTS?
There are toilets in the main village car park and refreshments are available at the two pubs and café in Horton. There are two more pubs along the route (the Station Inn at Ribblehead and the Old Hill Inn in Chapel-le-Dale) but you’ll need to check their opening times. There is usually a snack van at Ribblehead serving hot and cold snacks, so take some cash!

WHERE’S THE BEST PLACE TO STAY?
To get the most out of the challenge it’s best to spend two nights near your start and finish point to avoid travelling either early in the morning or at night. Horton-in-Ribblesdale offers a decent amount of accommodation and there are more options in nearby Ingleton and Settle.
HOW MUCH FOOD AND WATER SHOULD I CARRY?
If you’re walking the route in one day, aim to carry at least two litres of water, and possibly up to four litres on hot days. You’ll need to snack regularly as you’ll burn lots of calories. High energy snack bars, sandwiches, pork pies, bananas, nuts, chocolate and sugary sweets are all hillwalking favourites.

CAN I TAKE MY DOG?
Yes you can but this walk passes through a farmland so keep your dog under close control at all times and clean up after them. If you don’t walk your dog in the hills regularly make sure they accompany you on your training walks so they’re fully prepared.

More questions?
GET IN TOUCH and we’ll be happy to take you through all the options!
WHAT GEAR DO I NEED?

WATERPROOF JACKET
Have you heard it rains a bit in Yorkshire?

WINDPROOF TROUSERS
They’ll keep you warm without getting too sweaty.

3-SEASON BOOTS
Pick a comfortable pair and test them on plenty of training walks.

RUCKSACK
A day pack with around 25-litre capacity should be fine in summer.

GLOVES
It’s good to have one thin pair with a thicker waterproof pair as back-up.

HAT
No need to spend a lot of money on this, just pack something thick and warm.

MAP AND COMPASS
And more importantly, learn how to navigate with them!

TREKKING POLES (OPTIONAL)
Great for easing pressure on knees on ascents and descents.

GAITERS (OPTIONAL)
If the route’s wet and muddy they help keep water out of your boots.

WATERPROOF TROUSERS
A thin lightweight pair to pull over your trousers if it rains.

FLEECE OR WARM LAYER
If it’s warm and dry you’ll get away with one, but it’s best to be fully prepared.

DRY BAGS OR BIN LINER
Essential for keeping the contents of your rucksack dry.

HEAD TORCH AND BATTERIES
Could be a lifesaver if you get delayed on the hills after dark.

MOBILE PHONE AND PORTABLE CHARGER
Great for navigating but shouldn’t be exclusively relied on, and vital if you need to call for help.

FIRST AID KIT
A basic kit is fine but consider adding relevant extras like a thermal blanket and blister protection.

SUN CREAM
You never know, the sun may come out!

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The Yorkshire Three Peaks route is only a couple of miles short of marathon length with three major ascents packed into it, so you need to be in good shape!

The best way to train for a big day of hiking is by actually walking up hills.

Start training around two months before your challenge and if possible visit the Yorkshire Dales to familiarise yourself with the landscape. If travelling to Yorkshire isn’t possible, find a local hill of similar height to practice on.

START
If you’re new to walking then start off with training walks of 15-30 minutes.

THEN
Build up the length and difficulty as you get closer to your challenge date.

FINALLY
Make sure you try to do at least one training walk that covers the 24-mile distance.

Y
ou’ll be carrying a full rucksack on the challenge so replicate that in training by filling your pack with the same food and gear you intend to carry on the day!
The Yorkshire Three Peaks is attempted by thousands of people each year and its environmental impact is significant. Here are some ways to tackle it responsibly and reduce the impact of your visit:

**Make your visit as sustainable as possible by using public transport or car sharing.**

**Use established paths and tracks to minimise damage to fragile habitats. Don’t stray off paths to avoid a puddle or bit of mud because you risk damaging the undergrowth.**

**Support local business by staying locally and shopping locally.**

**There aren’t many bins along the route, so take all your rubbish home with you.**

Help protect the local environment by becoming a Friend of the Three Peaks.
Klean Kanteen is a family-owned company on a mission to stop single-use waste trashing the world!

Back in 2004 they introduced the first stainless steel, BPA-free reusable water bottle – and today their products are used and trusted by outdoor enthusiasts worldwide.

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