

Frequently Asked Questions

Application Process/Status

1. Why is there an application process? Any advice on maximizing my chances?

We are looking to create a supportive group that enhances the training experience of everyone involved (including the Chinese athletes). Therefore, when we open the application process we will accept applications until we have formed such a group. The best thing you can do to maximize your chance is to answer fill out the application truthfully and sincerely.

2. I don't have public videos of my lifting, what do I do?

Send your videos privately via Instagram to @mastrength We pair participants according to their strength levels and technical issues so that training can go more smoothly.

3. Do I need a certain lifting ability to attend?

No, we use your numbers to pair you with participants who are close to you so that the training can go smoothly and simulate actual Chinese training. Regardless of your ability, you will learn techniques and exercises that you most likely do not employ in your own training. Additionally, we also work to make sure that individuals in a training group are similar in abilities. It will help if you have the mobility to perform a stable overhead squat and front squat and already train regularly. Training sessions are about 3hrs long and about 9 sessions per week, so the closer you are to this level of work the easier you will adapt. We strongly recommend that you be injury-free prior to this camp.

4. Do I need to stay the whole 2 weeks? Can I come earlier or stay longer?

No. If you need to shorten your stay, please note that in the application form. Based on your needs, the costs of the camp may change but we will give preference for individuals who can stay the entire trip. If you arrive earlier or leave later then you have to secure your own accommodations and possibly transport to the airport or train station. Additionally, note that you cannot train in the training halls before or after the camp.

5. When will I hear back about my status? Can you let me know about my status?

We try to respond within a few days depending on the volume of the applications but it could take up to a week. Please DO NOT email about your status until after this time.

6. What happens if the camp is full?

Due to the volume of applications and the fact that individuals' circumstances can change, we will create a waiting list. Please note the waiting list is purely due to the volume of applications and does not reflect negatively on you. We will contact everyone as soon as the decisions have been finalized. You can also apply for a camp at another time within the same year.

7. I got hurt before the camp and can't participate due to injury, what do I do?

You can observe the training as a coach and shadow the coaches. We have had individuals participate as lifters and observers, both provide unique experiences into the Chinese system. We cannot refund payments past the payment deadlines.

8. Can I contact someone about their experience prior to attending?

Yes, please contact us for a list of references. You can also search #mastrength #mastrengthcamp to find posts by prior participants.

9. I attended a Ma Strength camp or seminar in the past, do I still have to apply?

Yes.

Travel Preparation

10. My plans changed, is my deposit refundable/transferable?

No. Deposits reserve your space for the camp designated on your application. They are non-refundable after you accept your spot. If you cancel, you must reapply for another camp.

11. Are my other payments refundable/transferable?

Payments other than the deposit are refundable until the deadline designated on the camp page. After the deadline, all payments are non-refundable. We cannot transfer payments to another camp.

12. How do I obtain a visa for this trip?

You will need an invitation and itinerary which we will provide soon after you have been accepted. Afterwards you can apply for a visa by:

- Booking with your local travel agent.
- Applying individually via the **Chinese embassy or consulate** directly. It will take about 5 business days for the process in the US but can be expedited for an additional fee. This might change if you reside outside the US.

You must have a non-expired passport to obtain a visa. Ideally you should have one prior to applying for the camp but if you do not have one, you can fast-track it so that you can apply for a visa ASAP. If you do not obtain a visa in a timely manner, you will forfeit your place in the camp without refund.

13. I don't speak Chinese, is that a problem? I am not fluent in English, is that a problem?

No. The coaches use a variety of techniques to get their point across, we also translate from Chinese to English/Spanish/Portuguese and Italian will be coming soon. Bring a friend if you don't speak any of these languages!

14. I have never been outside of my country. What is Chinese culture like?

Chinese culture is probably very different from what is presented in the west. In a nutshell, Chinese society is hierarchical, collective, and values social stability/harmony, so situations can be fluid in order to preserve these elements. This is very different from western cultures that emphasize individuality, freedom, and values the self over social stability.

Therefore, remember that we are guests and that your behavior will be reflective of our group as a whole so it is very important that you internalize this information and be aware of Chinese customs in order to fully enjoy the camp. Most of the time the hosts will not directly confront you with any problems but rather bring it to our attention so we require that you respect authority, go with the flow of things, and ask questions if you are unsure:

http://www.culturalsavvy.com/chinese_culture.htm
<http://travelblog.viator.com/how-to-avoid-culture-shock-in-china/>

15. Can I bring my spouse or significant other (who doesn't lift) with me?

We recommend to bring your significant other after the camp if you wish to tour China. The training, housing, meals, etc. are structured to meet the needs of camp participants and staff only. Additionally, you are expected to participate fully in camp training, meals, and activities regardless of the presence of your significant other.

16. Can I bring supplements and/or medications?

Protein powder/bars, vitamins, minerals, and liniments are fine. If you are taking any medications, please make sure to secure any prescriptions or notes you may need prior to your departure just in case you are questioned by airport security. We recommend bringing medication for popular ailments like headaches, indigestion, diarrhea, etc. Be careful when bringing any other supplements and check any customs laws to make sure they are allowed.

17. How much money should I bring with me?

The exchange rate between the US dollar and Chinese yuan is roughly \$1 = 6.5 yuan and buying power is greater as a result. The estimates for outings are based on this exchange rate and to account for the fact that you will spend much of your time training and eating at the dining halls. If you plan on buying many souvenirs, eating off base, then bring more and know that it is better to have a little extra than not. It may be possible to purchase some Chinese training gear (i.e. straps, wraps, knee sleeves, apparel, etc.) so you can stock up on those as well. The estimated amount may change depending on exchange rates between now and the time of the camp so please google the exchange rate between Chinese yuan and your home country currency.

18. When should I convert my money?

We strongly recommend that you do so either at your home airport or first international airport in China. Sometimes ATMs might be hard to come by and your credit/debit cards might be rejected unless you inform your bank prior to coming to China.

19. What should I bring with me?

You should bring your training gear, enough training clothes to last the trip, some non-lifting clothing for outings, walking/running shoes, and personal toiletries.

20. Is there laundry available?

Usually yes, either in the form of public washing machines or a paid washing service. Dryers are not used much so most people air dry their clothes. Sometimes soap is available at public washing machines but it can be easily purchased at a convenience store on or off the base.

21. What's the weather like at the summer/winter camp?

You can google the weather as the date gets closer but for a general overview, check out this site average information about China weather and enter the city name in the search term if it is not on the list.

<https://www.travelchinaguide.com/climate/>

22. Can I bring electronics?

You can bring electronics with you but make sure you purchase a plug-in converter to charge any laptops, hair dryers, etc.

23. Is there Wi-Fi? Can I access social media, email, etc?

Wi-Fi service can be slow and limited. Housing and dining areas usually have faster and more reliable Wi-Fi but you might not have a signal in the gym or off the base.

Keep in mind that Facebook, Instagram, google (along with its apps like gmail) are blocked in China. We strongly recommend that you either get a VPN for your phone BEFORE you arrive in China or use alternative apps like a backup email address.

24. Should I get vaccines before my trip?

The CDC has some helpful information that you can use to consult with your doctor prior to your trip as well as information on how to avoid bird

flu:<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china><http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/avian-flu-h7n9-china>

Camp Experience

25. Will someone pick me up from/to the airport?

If you arrive and depart on the designated arrival and departure dates then we will have someone meet you or a group of you at an announced time once we receive everyone's travel information.

If you arrive before the camp starts or leave after the camp ends then your transportation is on your own. We usually meet everyone at the airport on the designated pickup/departure day but might be able to pick you up from your hotel if there is a large enough group of you staying at the same hotel and you let us know your location in advance. Otherwise, you must meet us at the airport.

26. How many training sessions are there?

We follow the training of our host base closely but usually around 9 sessions per week. So some days will have double sessions while others will have single sessions. We will add technical sessions and conditioning sessions based on the characteristics of our group.

27. Can you send me the training program in advance?

No. We consult with the base about their training as well as take into account the characteristics of our group. Additionally, our coaches have discretion to modify the program to help you progress better.

28. What happens when I am not training?

We coordinate seminars throughout the camp with guest speakers and experts on various topics in Chinese weightlifting. Outside of that, we usually rest or eat. Sometimes people will go shopping if it is convenient to do so.

29. Is there any chance for site-seeing during the camp?

Yes, on Sundays we will coordinate some outings to popular tourist attractions or city center. These outings are NOT mandatory but you do need to let us know if you do NOT want to go since we need to coordinate transportation, restaurant reservations, etc.

30. What's the food like? What if I follow a special diet?

In the cafeteria it's Chinese food, usually local to the region and nothing else. Outside of the base there might be restaurants that serve western foods at your own expense. It is very different from western Chinese food in that you might have parts of animals you are not used to eating, different sauces, etc. but there are options to choose from and all meals contain protein, vegetables, rice, bread, and noodles. The food on the base is inspected and clean but if you have a sensitive stomach then please bring appropriate medication with you.

We cannot guarantee any special dietary requests so you should consider that before applying for the camp. Also, China is a tea-drinking culture so coffee availability is poor or lacking so you might want to bring some instant coffee with you. In fact if there is something that you feel you absolutely cannot go without, then bring it.

31. Will I meet my weightlifting idols?

In the past we have been able to coordinate appearances by current or past weightlifting champions. We have also trained alongside national, international, and Olympic level champions, however, such events are fluid and depend on many factors so we cannot guarantee them. If your primary reason for this trip is to meet such lifters and/or take pictures, then we strongly encourage you to NOT apply for this camp.

32. I want to shadow the coaches, is this an option?

Yes. Please designate that in your application. The fees and deadlines are the same as if you were to participate as a lifter.