

## Mount Cardrona, Otago

The walk begins at the Cardrona ski field car park. Bypass the Cardrona shop and begin hunting for the first trail marker. They're not easy to find. The first white post is behind the small bike skills area. Follow this to the left of the McDougalls Gondola and the trail will be seen winding to the ridgeline on the west.

Watch for mountain bikers in summer months and snow sports-people in the winter.

Once on the ridgeline, the trail crosses another extreme sports track and navigation becomes much easier from here.

Follow this stunning ridgeline around several more bike trails. There are signposts giving options for several routes. Take a right at the next signpost and then left to follow the Summit Loop Trail. This summit is the ski field summit at Pt1891m and is not to be confused with the peak of Mt Cardrona.

Continue east along the wide ridgeline and take care crossing any mountain tracks. Signage to Mt Cardrona summit is once again not apparent. However, once the ridge appears on the left-hand side, head in that direction. It's a short ascent from the ridgeline to the summit. The views to the north are exceptional.

The tops can be explored to the east and north. Surprisingly, in the summer, Mt Cardrona summit is rarely frequented.

The track can be reversed, however, to turn this into a nice loop return to the ridge and take a left on the Captain's Circuit (rather than reversing the initial ascent to the right). This track runs alongside a mountain bike trail and, at some points, is shared, so be careful. Rocky tops along the eastern ridgeline provide splendid perspective in front of the views of Cardrona Valley below. Shortly after the rocky terrain, the track leaves the mountain bike trail and bends to the right, descending towards the carting trail. Signposts are not clear, so be careful not to head down too far.

Cross the carting trail and head towards a small spur where there are two more mountain bike trails to cross. Begin the short ascent on the spur which is shared with a mountain bike trail until the top of the Whitestar Express Quad Gondola is reached. Head west, past McDougalls Gondola, until you reach the ridgeline track. Turn left to continue back to the car park.

### Wild File

**Access** Cardrona Skifield car park

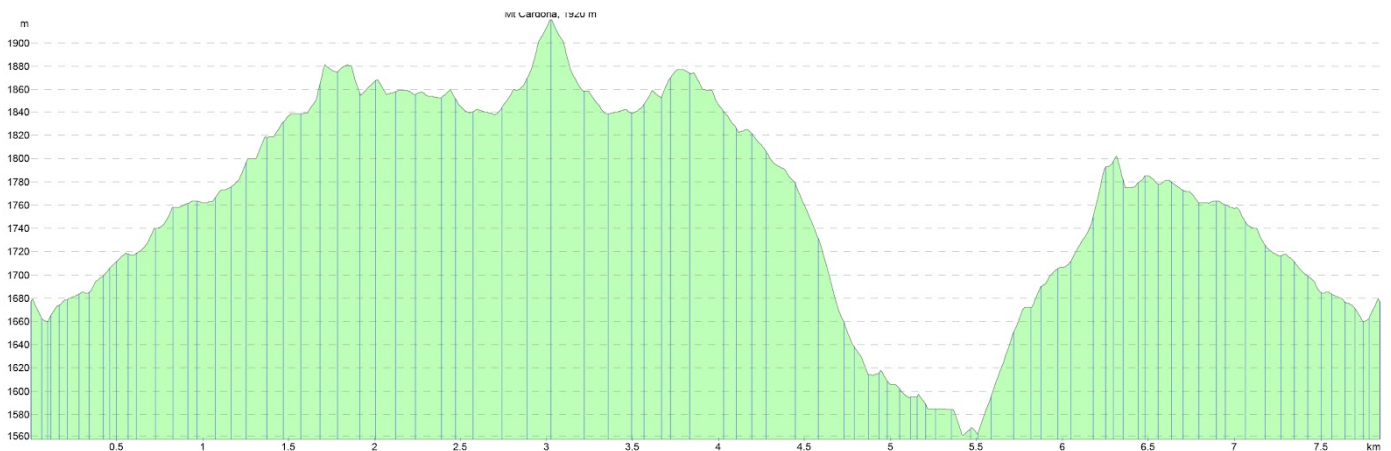
**Grade** Moderate

**Time** 4-5hr return

**Distance** 8km

**Total ascent** 635m

### Elevation



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