I'd give you an example of a good way to make the sides look if I wasn't going to school.
Edit: here is an old WIP screenshot from a Reborn map I'm making.
 http://i27.photobucket.com/albums/c175/r315razor/maping%20updates/Ice/Ice_11.jpg
Notice how the cliffs around aren't necessarily straight. They are more rounded, and that one on the middle section is actually inverted.

Just try not to stretch things so far that they get flat. Give them more polys.

If you plan on added fog to the map, then making long stretched out polys will make the map look horrible. Fog is distributed along the surface using the poly faces of the mesh. If there is only one poly, then the fog will always be there and your terrain will always look gray and textureless.