

Pre-acclimatisation lowers frostbite risk, extreme weight loss

Acclimatise in bed, climb Everest in half the time

KATHMANDU, May 11, (AFP): As other Everest hopefuls were trudging up to base camp in April, Singapore-based Brooks Entwistle was at home, planning his daughter's 13th birthday party and preparing for his company's annual general meeting.

But at night he would climb into a hypoxic, or low oxygen, tent meant to mimic the thin air at high altitude.

Now on Everest, Entwistle, a partner with Singapore's Everstone Group, is hoping to summit the world's highest peak in just 35 days — half the time of a conventional climb.

For decades, the dream of reaching the summit of Mount Everest has required at least two months on the mountain doing a series of acclimatisation rotations to get used to the harsh low-oxygen environment at the top of the world.

Now pre-acclimatisation, which has been at the fringes of the climbing world for several years, is gaining traction, dividing the community between those who see it as yet another tool of modern mountaineering and purists who dismiss it as a gimmick.

An increasing number of expedition organisers are offering "rapid ascent" packages that allow clients to pre-acclimatise in a tent at home before zipping up the world's tallest peaks in just a few weeks.

Entwistle and climbers with at least two other operators are attempting to summit Everest this year after using pre-acclimatisation tents, each paying between \$75,000 and \$85,000, more than double the cheapest rates to scale Everest the conventional way.



This picture taken on April 22, 2017 shows Brooks Entwistle posing after performing hypoxic rowing training in preparation for his attempt to summit Mount Everest in Singapore. (AFP)

Proponents of pre-acclimatisation say spending less time on the mountain lowers the risk of frostbite, accidents and extreme weight loss commonly associated with high-altitude mountaineering.

"We've been doing this for a few years, now we've seen other companies offering it

as well ... their clients are demanding it," said US-based Adrian Ballinger of Alpenglou Expeditions, who started experimenting with the tents in 2011.

"People are actually healthier on the climb because they don't spend so much time on the mountain," said Ballinger, who took one

client up Everest in 2013 using the system and another four in 2016.

In 2014, Entwistle had a rare nine-month break from work. He headed to Everest in early April to begin acclimatising and planned to make a push for the summit in mid May.

But his plans were disrupted by an avalanche that killed 16 Sherpa guides and effectively shut down the climbing season.

"I don't have time like that now. For me, it would be impossible to go up Everest without this method," Entwistle said.

Hypoxic tents have long been used by athletes to build lung capacity as part of their training.

Nitrogen is pumped into the sealed tent to recreate a high-altitude environment by reducing oxygen levels so that the body adapts to thinner air.

"I believe every climber has used technologies of the day to the maximum they can, whether for communication or training. Today, hypoxic training is one of those tools," said Ballinger, who is taking Entwistle and one other client up Everest from the northern Tibet side this year.

Ballinger requires climbers on the 'rapid ascent' packages to have previously climbed at least one of the 14 mountains in the world that are over 8,000 metres.

Next year, Austrian company Furtenbach Adventure is taking it to the next level with a 'Flash Everest' package that promises a summit in less than four weeks, aided by hypoxic tents and increased supplemental oxygen.

Veteran expedition operator Simon Lowe is

a vocal critic of the method, calling it "quack medicine", and believes in the traditional mantra of climbing high and sleeping low.

"This (pre-acclimatisation) is the inverse of what we know works," Lowe said.

Lowe says that the method only gets results because companies provide the climbers with much more supplemental oxygen than on a conventional climb.

That brings its own problems, requiring Sherpa guides to make repeated risky climbs to leave additional oxygen bottles for the climbers to collect during their ascent, while also resulting in more empty canisters left on the mountainside.

"If you extend this to everybody, it will be a disaster. They (pre-acclimatised climbers) won't have the flexibility to respond to Everest and its weather and will take risks putting everyone in danger," Lowe added.

American climber Kent Stewart, who has scaled the highest peaks on six continents, intends to pre-acclimatise before his bid to complete the "Seven Summits" with Everest next year.

Stewart suffers extreme weight loss during expeditions and found the tents to be a useful way to shorten his trips.

"You eat and sleep at home and are not exposed to the dangers of being on the mountain," Stewart said.

Ballinger agrees and says the technique is here to stay.

"I predict that in 10 years there will be no 65-day expeditions with supplemental oxygen up Everest."

Destinations



In this photo taken on April 13, 2017 the Bonsecours Market at the Rue Saint Paul Est is shown in Old Montreal, in Montreal. (AP)

Old Montreal charming, full of life

Destination Montreal: Perfect family getaway

By Sigal Ratner-Arias

We were looking for a fun, short family vacation, close enough to home that we could drive there, and far enough away that we could savor a bit of a different culture.

We decided to head for Montreal. I had visited once before and always wanted to go back. Our two oldest sons (a sixth grader and high school freshman) both learning French in school made it an easy decision, and our kindergartener was onboard too. So we packed, grabbed passports and drove north from New York. In a matter of hours we saw the "Bienvenue" sign at the border. Immigration was easy and soon we were at our hotel downtown with four days to enjoy the city.

Visiting Canada is especially affordable right now for US residents, with \$1 Canadian worth just 73 cents US. With all the delicious food, though — poutine and maple everything — I only wish I could have applied the same math to the calories.

A few highlights of our trip:

■ **The Botanical Garden And Insectarium:** With its Chinese, Japanese and First Nation gardens, arboretum and greenhouses, the Botanical Garden is a popular stop. Even on a rainy day, you can visit creatures — alive and dead — at the Insectarium. The kids were grossed out but loved it.

■ **Chagall: Colour and Music:** This remarkable show through June 11 at the

Museum of Fine Arts focuses on Marc Chagall's connection to music in his life and work, through 340 works of art that include paintings, works on paper, sculptures, ceramics, stained glass and tapestries. We were particularly fascinated by his work for the stage, including over 100 costumes, masks and sets for "The Magic Flute" and the ballets "Aleko," "The Firebird" and "Daphnis and Chloe."

■ **The Science Center:** A highlight for the kids. From working together to solve a crime at the "CSI: The Experience" exhibit (through Sept 4) to hands-on activities at the permanent exhibitions and 3-D IMAX movies, the Science Center is a fun and cool place. Go early to make the most of it and then take the rest of the day to shop, stroll and eat in Old Montreal.

■ **Old Montreal:** Old Montreal (Vieux Montreal) is the oldest part of the city, with some remnants dating back to New France. It's charming and full of life, with restaurants, shops, cafes and art galleries along the Rue de la Commune and beyond. A few places to visit are Place Jacques Cartier, in front of the Montreal city hall, and Place d'Armes, surrounded by buildings that include the Notre-Dame basilica. (Recent flooding in Quebec did not affect Old Montreal or most other areas around the city frequented by tourists.)

■ **Dinner and Live Jazz:** We had a memorable dinner at Jardin Nelson, located at Place Jacques Cartier, where we sat in a beautiful courtyard surrounded by old stone

buildings listening to live jazz. The highlight of our delicious meal was an amazing dessert, a traditional Quebecois treat with vanilla ice cream and maple syrup called pouding chomeur.

■ **Quebec City:** Quebec City, the province's capital, is a three-hour drive from Montreal and a worthy side trip. Don't miss the iconic landmark Chateau Frontenac, and the Terrasse Dufferin that wraps around it. With cannons spread along the walkway, the terrace offers beautiful views of the St Lawrence



In this photo taken on April 12, 2017 bugs from around the world are shown at the Botanical Garden and Insectarium in Montreal. (AP)

River. The European-looking streets around boast restaurants, cafes, little shops and boutiques. Other attractions include a waterfall, Montmorency Falls, and a picturesque island, Ile d'Orleans, accessible by bridge.

■ **Seasonal Attractions:** For those who can visit late winter and early spring, consider a stop at a traditional maple sugar shack called Erabliere Charbonneau, where we had a fabulous all you-can-eat lunch of pea soup, coleslaw, baked omelette, maple sausages, baked beans, meatball stew and more, served with a bottle of maple syrup and desserts that included buckwheat pancakes, maple taffy on snow and my favorite, sugar pie. The venue has other attractions like a zipline that remain open now. Other seasonal events include the city's famous International Jazz Festival, June 29-July 8. A series of events are also taking place this year for the city's 375th anniversary and marking 50 years since Montreal hosted Expo '67, while Canada is celebrating 150 years of the country's confederation.

■ **Those Famous Bagels:** We couldn't have left without trying Montreal's famous bagels. A Canadian friend living in the US had told me about the St-Viateur and Fairmount rivalry and since I wanted to bring her some of her favorites, we stopped at St-Viateur before heading back home. We ordered a dozen assorted bagels — plain, sesame, onion, whole wheat, poppy ... and they were delicious. They felt lighter than American bagels and less salty. We'll try Fairmount's on our next trip. (AP)

click

Alcoholics Anonymous: If you know someone who can't stop drinking and would like to help them please check us out and we promise to try to help at www.aarabia.org There are no fees. This is a genuine public service.

Drinking problem?: Friends of Bill W. are available to help. Totally confidential. Email: rohsecretary@gmail.com

Narcotics Anonymous: NA can help with addiction problems. Totally confidential: 94087800 English/Arabic.

Cancer online support group: If you are Cancer patient or family member fighting with this deadly disease, come join our online support group. Best way of dealing with this disease is providing support and share our experience with each other. There are lot of things which even doctors can't tell so be member of this website and start sharing your experiences which may help others. October is recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM). The primary purpose is to promote self examination and screening mammography as the most effective way to save lives by detecting breast cancer at early stage. For more information visit: <http://fightingwithcancer.webs.com/>

Latest

Invitation to Grand Mosque: The Visits Department is pleased to invite you to visit the Grand Mosque, which is one of Kuwait's most treasured religious and cultural landmarks to discover the beauty of Islamic arts and architecture. Free guided tours are available all year round on official working days between (9-11 am) and (5-7 pm), within a special tour program designed to cater to the needs of different age groups. The program is as follows:

Reception; Auditorium show; (according to age group); Touring the Mosque; Q & A; Art workshops; (according to age group — between 5 and 18 years old); Snack break; Distribution of the Grand Mosque publications and souvenirs; End of tour.

According to these age groups:
Age group: 5 to 9 years old: Morning: 60 visitors max; Evening: 20; 10 to 15 years: Morning: 100 visitors max; Evening: 45; 16 and above: Morning: 140 visitors max, Evening: 105;

Tour language: Arabic- English- French; Arabic (English upon prior request); Arabic-English- French; Arabic (English upon prior request); Arabic- English- French: Arabic (English upon prior request)

Rules and Regulations:
■ Please arrive in time for your visit.
■ All visitors are kindly required to abide by the mosque's dress code. Male visitors should wear long pants. Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not allowed. Female visitors: should wear head cover and long loose clothing (available at the mosque).
■ Foods and drinks are not allowed inside the prayer halls.
■ For school visits, teachers are responsible for their students and are required to cooperate with the staff members of the Grand Mosque.
■ Photography is allowed inside the Grand Mosque (please note that disrespectful poses are strictly prohibited).

If you would like to book a tour, please contact us:
Tel: 22980813/ 22980815/ 22980812
Email: gmvisits@gmail.com
Fax: 22473708

May 18
KPWA summer picnic: Kerala Pravasi Welfare Association (KPWA) is organizing a playful-knowledge hunting picnic (KPWA Summer Picnic) on May 18-19, 2017 for Kuwait Malayalees community at Kabd farm. The organizers are working together to make this one of the most useful, remarkable and gaining experience in a variety life for expatriate Kerala. In-spite of enjoyment, games and cultural activities, the camp is also added on with NORKA registration, Classes on Pravasi Welfare by Govt of Kerala. "How can I be an entrepreneur" class enables attendees gain knowledge on how to save and keep the wealth of the working people for future. Back to the world of reading activity with traditional libraries are additional attractions. In addition to this, in camp telecast two short-films, "Muhajir" by Muneer Ahmed and "Be Positive" By Akbar Kulathupuzha which is more relevant to expatriate life journey and remote family background stories. Camp will also honor the crew and those who worked behind these Pravasi short-films.

Continued on Page 24