

Pre-climb training

No matter how fit you are, it's your ability to deal with the high altitude that will determine your success. The extra day of acclimatization WILL increase your chances of success up to 90%. For the training, this is what I recommend. You probably won't need to do everything (hundreds of people every year get up there with much less preparation), but it will allow you to get to the summit and back and FEEL GOOD. Not just good, GREAT! Yeah, a lot of people do it every year w/out preparing, but a lot of them also don't enjoy the process of "getting" there and come back injured. I prefer spending more time preparing myself BEFORE the climb, so that when I am climbing, I don't suffer like most people do, and can enjoy my time a lot better. This is what you need:

1) Lower Body Strength Training, 3 times a week, starting from at least 3 months before the climb. This is the type of work that makes your lower body stronger, therefore decreasing the chances of injuring muscles or joints during the climb. In every gym, you can go through this simple routine and find easily the following machines:

- Leg Press Machine (3×15) (for your quadriceps femoris, the muscles in front of your thighs)
- Leg Curl Machine (3×15) (for your hamstrings, the muscles behind your thighs)
- Standing Calf Machine (3×15) (for your calves)
- Hip Abduction Machine (outer thigh muscles) (2×20) and Hip Adduction Machine (inner thigh muscles) (2×20), mostly for stabilization
- Some other free weights exercises would be very good, but it is easier for a beginner to find out how to use those machines than using free weights. Just PM me, if you need any advice.

2) General Cardiovascular Training, 3 times a week, starting from at least 3 months before the climb: the stairmaster cardio machine is probably the best, as it resembles the motion you will be doing hike on an inclined terrain. I would recommend starting with 20 minutes (beginner level) and move up gradually to 30 minutes (even more if you're already doing some cardio on your own and you want to step to the next level). This is the type of work that makes you fit in general, allowing you to feel not incredibly tired during the climb.

3) Specific Cardiovascular Training (the most important): hiking, hiking, hiking! This is the type of work that creates that specific adaptation your body needs in order to hike for several hours in a row. The starting level depends on whether or not you're used to walk every day and for how long. People who walk already 1 hour a day can start gradually increasing the daily walking time later in their preparation, but individuals who barely walk everyday will need to start a few months before their climb. Begin walking an extra half hour a day for 2 weeks. Then increase to 1 hour a day for the following 2 weeks. Then increase to 1 1/2 hours a day for another 2 weeks up until you're walking 2 hours a day. It doesn't need to be continuous: you can walk to work early am in an hour and walk back in the afternoon. After the first couple of months, you can start doing longer hikes just on the days you don't do the general cardiovascular workout. From 2 to 3 to 4 hours per hike. In the 3-4 weeks before the climb, you should increase this to more time, as you will need it the night of the summit attempt. If you live in a big city and flat terrain is all you have, it will do, but if you can hike on inclined terrain it will work better for your purpose.

Consider that, depending on the route you choose, you won't probably hike more than 5-6 hours per day, but, the night of the summit, you'll hike around an average of 6-7 hours up and 6-7 hours down and that will take a big toll on your body. You need to be ready, otherwise it could be a hell (especially coming down). I've seen quite a lot of people who made it up to the summit really in trouble coming down. Again, they made it, but I am sure they would not remember it as a pleasurable experience!

4) Some type of Stabilization Training to increase Balance, which is very important in order to decrease the chances of falls. It's not as simple to explain, so, if you need some advice, just PM me. I will be happy to help you.

In the end, NEVER push it too much, and give yourself enough rest. You're training to be stronger and have more endurance, NOT to injury yourself. The level of intensity should be moderate. You don't want to do the cardio session on the same days you're walking long distance.

Overloads should be challenging and should be increased gradually, but they also should be pushed without reaching full exhaustion; the general cardio should be performed at an intensity that would allow you to engage yourself in a light conversation & the specific cardio should never be more than what your body can comfortably do. Handling the altitude will be important, but the level of fitness is important, too, and not only to prepare your body for the night of the summit attempt, but also to allow yourself to enjoy the climb. It's not fun going up pulled by your guide and wish you weren't there! It's worth training just for the opportunity to enjoy the whole experience.

Most of the people I saw going up did not seem to be particularly fit, and, believe me, they were NOT having fun. If you have time available, make the effort of getting fit for it. You will enjoy every single step of your climb. It will give you an initial goal to get stronger and improve your stamina, and, hopefully, you will carry it on all your life. The sleeping bag is an important thing. A good night sleep has more value than anything else, when you're hiking day after day. And waterproof everything, as nothing dries up there, and you don't want to quit your climb for hypothermia. Walk slowly and try not to stop every few minutes. Every time you stop, you lose your rhythm, and you make it really hard to get up and walk again.

Enjoy the climb!