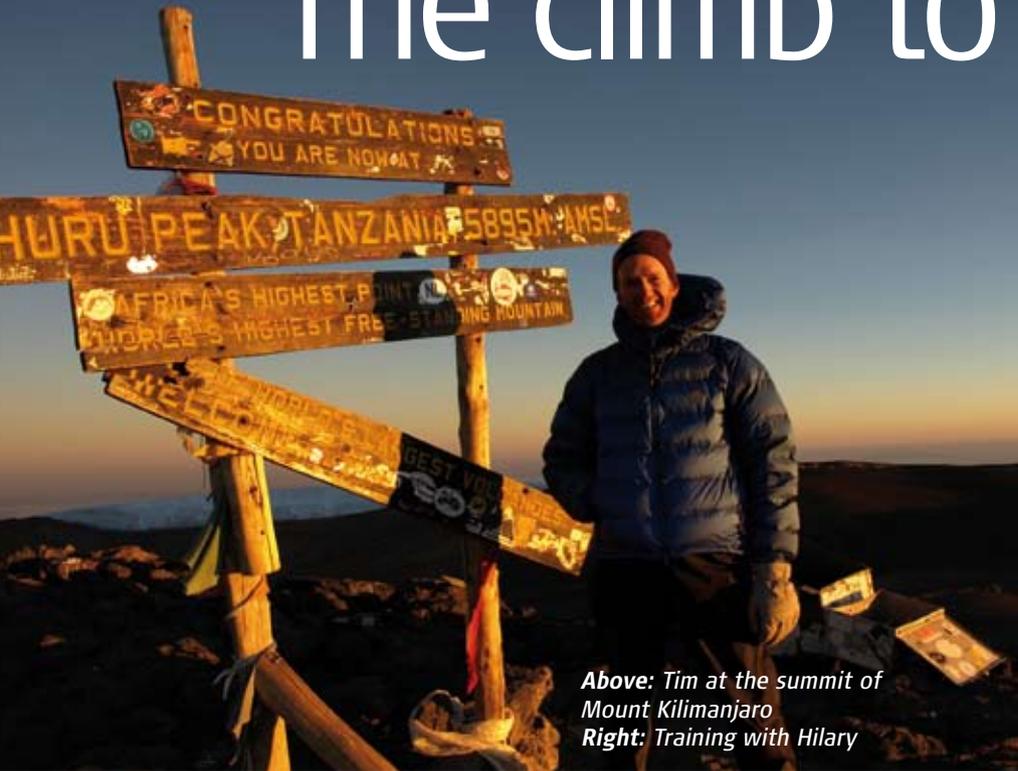


The climb to fitness



Above: Tim at the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro
Right: Training with Hilary

Training for a specific event or sport means focusing your efforts on the job in hand and keeping your programme relevant to what you want to achieve, says Chinnor-based personal fitness trainer **Hilary Westall.**



When Thame-based management consultant, Tim Jones, 45, decided to accompany a friend on a lifelong ambition to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in October, he knew it would be no mean feat. Kilimanjaro, with its three volcanic cones, is an inactive stratovolcano in north-eastern Tanzania and boasts the highest peak in Africa at 5,895 metres. Comprising an eight-day uphill trek, with the final day being by far the steepest and made much more difficult by the extreme altitude, aerobic fitness, strength and stamina are clearly vital components for those wishing to succeed – typically, less than 50 per cent of those who venture there actually make it.

Already aerobically very fit from many years spent cycling, walking and playing football, Tim decided to enhance his fitness with some personal training.

“I wanted to not only maintain my current fitness level, but also improve my core stability, joint strength and flexibility to reduce my risk of injury, especially during the descent which puts a lot of stress on the legs and back,” says Tim. “I wasn’t really sure how to do this so decided to embark on a six week personal training programme with Hilary, focusing on these areas in the run-up to the trip.”

To improve performance and prevent injury for any sport or fitness goal, a fitness programme needs to be specific and functional for that activity, taking

into consideration what movements are required and which muscles are used to enhance performance rather than detract from it. So for Tim’s trip, Hilary focused on total body exercises using free weights that worked the main muscle groups he’d be using during the climb: hamstrings, quadriceps (thighs), gluteals (bottom), calves and core (torso); and a stability ball to challenge his balance and proprioception (body awareness). In addition to his ongoing aerobic training, which was mainly cycling, Hilary added in some high intensity interval training on the rowing machine and stationary bike, and treadmill walking on a steep incline, to boost his endurance and aerobic capacity.

“My level of fitness really came into its own on summit day and made the difference between success and failure,” continues Tim. “Six hours of climbing up steep, loose scree and climbing onto rocks made the muscle-burning workouts at home worthwhile! On the descent I really noticed the difference in my legs, using my thigh muscles rather than my knee joints to control my movements, which reduced the impact on my knees.

“Summit day was fantastic but acclimatising is long and hard – I’m just glad I was as fit as I could be to tackle the challenge or it wouldn’t have been as enjoyable.”

Tim is now preparing for his family skiing holiday at the end of December

with some more targeted training with Hilary, along with his wife, Helen.

“Having appreciated the difference my sessions made to the Kilimanjaro trek, I persuaded Helen to train with me to get us better prepared for skiing,” he says. “Skiing is pretty tough on the legs but with some extra training under our belts we can enjoy the experience more and tackle those black runs with ease!”

Skiing will also benefit from targeted exercise, working on specific muscle groups and movements and, of course, all round aerobic conditioning. So why not be as fit as you can for your physical challenges and hobbies and enjoy it to the full!

Contact Hilary on **07812 097562**, email: hilarywestall@googlemail.com or visit www.hilarypersonaltrainer.co.uk.

She also runs a group body conditioning class in the Reading Rooms in Chinnor High Street on Friday mornings from 10-11am.



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