

Scaling Africa's highest peak

Fifteen-year-old William Joseph, who recently scaled Mount Kilimanjaro, talks about his experience

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It was the first time that the Class IX student from Indus International School, William Joseph, had set foot on a mountain. He had started training just two months before he scaled the highest mountain in Africa — Mount Kilimanjaro, recently. This expedition is a dream for many mountaineers across the globe. “At first, I was scared, but with the right motivation, I was all set to take the journey. My family, too, encouraged me,” he says adding, “The training started after summer vacations and we had to do a five km run and 500 squats. The thigh and shoulder exercises helped us train for the mission.”

The entire trek took the 13-member team five days to complete. “The trek tested our determination. On the first day, we went through a rainforest which was pretty steep. Since this was my first time, it was challenging to get used to it. The second day was much more comfortable. The next day, we passed through what looked like a grassland, which was much flatter. We then reached Horombo Hut, which is at a height of 3,700 metres. We stayed there for an extra day to get acclimatised.”

He continues, “On our journey forward, our body slowly got used to low oxygen levels. We then headed to Kibo Hut, which is at a height of 4,730 metres. Taking long breaks during the trek was not advised as the body could get lazy, but many students were showing signs of acute mountain sickness. We stopped by Kibo for the night, to rest.”

William and his group then started for the peak at 12 am, and walked with the help of torch lights. “It takes around five hours to reach the peak, but it took us seven. We walked extremely slowly to conserve oxygen,” he says.

The group then reached Uhuru, the highest peak of the mountain. “But we couldn't

stop to celebrate for long. At that moment, we were very exhausted and had to head back soon. After I reached the base of the mountain, it finally sunk in that I did it. I was extremely happy. I gave my parents the good news — they are very proud of me,” says William.

This has instilled a love for the mountains in William, who now wants to go on more such expeditions. “The whole expedition happened very quickly. It would not feel right if I did not do this again,” he concludes.



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**WILLIAM JOSEPH
STUDENT**