

EXPEDITION QUESTIONNAIRE



Participant Information

name

age

height (ft/in)

weight (lbs)

Expedition

first choice

start date

second choice

start date

Climbing Denali, Foraker, and other Alaska Range peaks is a tremendous challenge that will draw upon all of your past climbing experiences. Heavy packs (60 lbs/27 kilos), glacier travel, exposed icy slopes, and extreme weather, combined with high latitudes and altitude create uniquely challenging conditions. These physical difficulties and the mental challenge of living in close quarters for many days require the highest level of endurance and teamwork.

Please fill out this questionnaire and provide as much detail as possible so that, to the best of our ability, we can determine your level of preparedness for your climb. Include any supporting documentation, such as evaluations or certificates of completion from previous instructional or guided climbs and training courses.

Denali Applicants Please Note: *Carefully review the required experience information within this document to further understand the rigors of climbing Denali. Before attempting Denali with us, your resume must meet all the criteria. Denali is NOT the place to learn about mountaineering for the first time; it is the place to put acquired skills to the test.*

Screening applicants is not an exact science. We rely upon applicants to assess their skills honestly, so that every team has the best chance to climb Denali while managing risks with strength and in excellent form. We take screening very seriously, and while we inquire about previous experience and fitness levels to determine ability, it does not always ensure absolute readiness for Denali. We ask that you prioritize your training and preparation and follow our recommendations to help avoid disappointment. Between 2009-2019, the average summit success rate was between 36-68%, Denali's summit can be elusive for even the best-prepared climber. It is not unusual for qualified climbers to make several attempts before reaching the top. That is why, at AMS, we share your goal of summing yet also define success as the highest-quality climbing experience overall.

Climbers who are unprepared, or who climb in a manner that puts themselves or others at risk, will be asked to leave the expedition early. This will be determined by the guides, with their knowledge of risk management and the stamina required for the climb.

Questionnaire

How often do you climb mountain routes that require using a rope and harness?

Describe your experience practicing self-arrest, using an ice axe, and wearing crampons:

☐ Yes ☐ No Are you comfortable climbing with crampons on, while carrying a 60-lb pack, on an exposed terrain of 30 degrees?

☐ Yes ☐ No Have you ever participated in a formal climbing or backpacking instructional course?

If yes, please include date of course, name of company, location, number of days, and skills learned:

☐ Yes ☐ No Have you ever gone on an unsupported overnight backpacking trip where you carried all of your own supplies?

Describe your longest overnight backpacking trip:

Describe your winter camping experience:

☐ Yes ☐ No Have you ever set up a 3:1(Z) pulley system?

☐ Yes ☐ No Have you ever ascended out of a crevasse?

Additional Comments

Climbing Resume

Date	Mountain/Location	Route	Guided?	Mountaineering Skills	Elevation reached; if no summit, why?
6/14	Gannet Peak/WY	Regular	Yes. Exum, Jackson Hole Lead guide: Mike Gardner	Ice axe, crampons, roped glacier travel	13,800ft - summit

Additional Comments

Other Wilderness Backcountry Travel and Winter Camping Experience

Date	Location	Route and miles covered	Pack weight	Guided?	Shelter used	No. of days

Regular Fitness Routine and Strength Training

Activity	Frequency

Planned Pre-Expedition Training Program

Approx. date	Training

Supplement for Denali Applicants: Expedition Requirements

By joining an AMS Denali expedition, you are making a commitment to arrive for your climb physically and mentally prepared for its rigors. Your training leading up to this expedition will make it a successful experience and add to the safety of yourself and the team. Below are some characteristics of the climb to help you determine whether it is right for you.

Remote

Denali is located in an isolated wilderness area where there are no roads, trails, or huts. Access is restricted to one glaciated airstrip surrounded by miles of crevasses. If you or your guides determine you are not prepared for these challenges, you will be evacuated in the safest and most expedient way possible, but it will take time. There will be no high-pointing. You are expected to recognize the difficulties associated with remoteness.

Unsupported/Self-Sufficient

Denali is unsupported. Unsupported means you have to pack your personal and group equipment, food, and fuel. There are no porters, cooks, or other support staff. You and the guides do it all. Denali should not be the first time you go on an unsupported expedition. With experience, you become more careful in choosing what is essential to bring. Your gear check in Talkeetna will be strict and focus on the necessities. You are expected to understand the challenges facing unsupported expeditions.

Winter Camping and Travel

Denali is located only 50 miles south of the Arctic Circle. It demands expertise in winter climbing and camping techniques. It is not enough to know how to tie a knot; you need to be able to tie it with mittens. When you forget to sleep with your water bottle, you waste valuable time and fuel resources trying to melt it in boiling water. Failure to dry your socks every night will lead to foot problems. You must be skilled with snowshoes. We will travel on snowshoes up to 11,000 ft, then use crampons for the rest of the climb. You are expected to go on winter climbs and overnight winter backpacking trips to prepare you for the environment you will encounter on Denali.

Pack and Sled Weight

The single biggest contributor to difficulty on Denali is pack weight. You should be comfortable carrying a 60-lb pack. Climbing Everest or any of the other 7 summits won't help here. The first day travelling on the glacier you will be carrying a full, 60-lb pack and pulling a 40-lb sled. This totals 100 lbs of gear. Higher on the mountain, you have to be able to comfortably put on and take off your backpack on a 30-degree slope wearing crampons. It will be windy and cold. Every person is expected to be able to handle these loads.

Glacier Travel

The Kahiltna Glacier has crevasses that are unavoidable. Throughout the climb we travel on an active glacier and we travel over snow bridges. We use route-finding strategies and roped travel techniques to reduce cases of crevasse falls and to help reduce significant injuries in the case of a crevasse fall. In order for this belay technique to work, the rope needs to be a certain tension. This requires everyone's constant attention to maintain the leader's pace, not your own. She or he will set a pace that you should be able to follow all day. It will be moderate, but steady, with regular breaks for food and water. You will travel between camps and to the summit roped to team mates for the entirety of the expedition.

Crevasse Rescue

Climbing Denali is technically basic, but the rescue systems you might have to use are quite advanced. Knowing what to do in a real crevasse fall is best left to the guides, but what if the guide falls into a crevasse? Building anchors, tying off a fallen climber, transferring a load, and setting up a hauling system are all prerequisites. You might be the one who drops

into the crevasse, so you need to know how to ascend a rope. Before you fly onto the glacier, you will have an opportunity to ascend a fixed line at AMS. You are expected to understand the fundamentals of crevasse rescue and how to successfully ascend a fixed line.

Crampons

Denali is an icy mountain, climbed almost entirely wearing crampons. Crampons are vital tools that must be sharp and must never fall off your boots. Repeated trips, falls, or stepping on the rope are safety hazards for yourself and your team mates. You are expected to be comfortable climbing in crampons while carrying a 60-lb pack.

Self-Arrest

Being able to arrest a fall is a vital mountaineering skill. Lower on the mountain, crevasse falls are the concern. Higher on the mountain, falls on steep, exposed, icy slopes are the concern. You are expected to be able to get into the self-arrest position and arrest a fall using an ice axe.

Technical Skills

The West Buttress route requires basic climbing skills: figure 8 knot, prussic hitch, rope coiling, belaying, building an anchor, passing running protection, using an ascender on a fixed line. These skills are best learned for the first time in a formal class setting, then practiced later unsupervised. You are expected to understand basic climbing skills and commands.

Teamwork

You will be part of a group. The people that matter will be the members of your group. Strength on Denali is working together and functioning well, which requires strong communication skills, honesty, patience and politeness. Being a strong team member is about putting in 110 percent. Only a team of climbers will reach the summit; no soloing is permitted. You will be expected to participate in teamwork, resolving conflicts, and building camaraderie.

High Altitude-Related Illness

Denali's high altitude poses a health challenge for all participants. We recommend that you subject your body to high altitude before attempting Denali. We are not doctors, but we have expert physicians as our advisors. High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema are serious, potentially deadly, illnesses. Anyone showing early signs of HAPE with shortness of breath following mild exercise and coupled with a 10-point drop in blood-oxygen saturation levels should not go higher. You are expected to communicate honestly about your health and any medications you plan to take.

Stamina

Denali is a marathon, not a sprint. If, on the lower mountain, you are consistently struggling and not recovering, you will be required to descend early before moving to higher elevations, therefore it is your best interest to arrive as prepared as possible. If you are unprepared and pose a safety risk to yourself or others, the guides may be required to turn your entire rope team around at higher elevations on the mountain, where the exposure and consequences pose a greater risk for yourself and the entire team. Anyone in doubt of their physical preparedness may be asked to perform a stamina evaluation test. You are expected to have the stamina to endure the rigors of expedition life and be ready for a 12- to 14-hour summit day.

Please sign and date that you have read and understand these requirements. If you have additional questions, please contact us.

signature

date