

Loeffler completed the world's hardest bicycle trip last fall, riding from Tibet to Nepal — that's over 1,200 kilometres through eight mountain passes.

"I have renewed my commitment to be very mindful every step of the way, to train both my body and mind, to listen to my intuition, to practice impeccable risk and hazard management, and to commit to both the summit and a safe return," she writes in her online training journal (www.taclimbsdenali.com).

For her physical training, Loeffler runs up to five times a week, with one long run that lasts over two hours.

"I go to step aerobics and I'm famous around campus because I'll take my large backpack (which weighs about 40 pounds) and wear it to step class and gradually up the weight."

She also does weight training, and as her climb gets closer she works outdoors for longer hikes with the same backpack — that includes hiking up Signal Hill a few times. Training can take up 15-25 hours of her week.

But mental strength can be even more important than physical endurance.

"I meditate and spend some time learning about Buddhist philosophy as a way to have both kinds of strength when doing challenges. Some days I think it's even more mental than physical. I find my mind gives out before my body does. That was one thing I learned on Denali — there



Greg Rainceff photo

were a few times when we just didn't have time to eat or drink for hours and so you physically were just out of groceries — there was no energy left, but at that moment you can will yourself to keep going."

QUEEN SING IT BEST

Besides training and class, Loeffler does a lot of motivational speaking and has a unique way of demonstrating her feelings when they reached the top of Denali.

"I've got collections of pictures from summit day and I play the song *We Are The Champions*, and I apologize for being a sappy sentimentalist from the '80s," she laughs, "but it's really truly that sense of wow, in this moment 10 months of hard training and 26 days of hard climbing and