

APRIL 29TH

I dreamt that i had imagined all the aches and pains in my bones but reality hit when i heard Guy waking us up at 9.00am. The pain was in every joint and i could hardly move in my sleeping bag it was so sore.. The sun was just coming up and it was still freezing, frost hanging from the tent ceiling and all our breath was a frozen layer of ice on our sleeping bags. With hugely unattractive puffy eyes i emerged from my tent and began the arduous job of reloading my sled and packing up our tent for the move up to camp 2. Again we were going to do a single carry to try and buy ourselves some extra weather days if necessary later on in the climb. The chances of getting stuck in a storm on Denali for weeks at a time is very likely so whilst it was sunny we were all anxious to move up to the higher altitudes as soon as we could, that was the upside to these torturously heavy loads that we were schlepping uphill!! By the time we had breakfast and broken camp it was noon and it was hot like you wouldnt believe after the frigid temperatures we endured overnight. The sun reflecting on the snow is like a solar oven and the heat is stiffling, however i prefer this to the cold so im not going to complain too much about the discomfort! Greg has been doing great, this is his third of the Seven Summits but Denali is a little bit of a shock after Kilimanjaro and Elbrus, which are his previous two climbs.. Both the length of the trip, the loads we have to carry and the climb itself - Denali is by no means an easy climb especially so early in the season as we are now, we pretty much have the mountain to ourselves unlike in June where apparently you can have a line of up to 200 people on the headwall at the same time!! - i can feel this is going to be difficult already on day 2!!

After about 5 hours of hauling our huge loads uphill, (i think we resemble jumbo tortoises) we made a unanimous decision to camp before Camp 2 in order not to blow ourselves up so early in the climb. We were probably an hour or so short of Camp when we started to pitch our tents for the night. It was nice to set up camp in the sun before the temperature plummeted and my left knee was throbbing from some pain or other. I did my diary interview with Marky Mark as i call him, we had dinner and we were all asleep imminently and didnt stir for 12 hours - gives you an indication how tired we all are from the weight!! I should mention that the guides are carrying way more than Greg and I - i think they would be cross with me if i didnt emphasize that, although dont think we were in any way light!!!