



Tyler enjoys the sun on Day 20.

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We've been popping up in the media a bit lately. Here's Tyler's interview with the main site for expedition news, thepoles.com

[Reprinted from thepoles.com](#)

During the 2009 Arctic ski season John Huston and Tyler Fish became the first Americans to ski unassisted, unsupported to the North Pole.

In the interview Tyler gives valuable North Pole advice, he talks about their food and fuel, not having a rest day, his scariest and best moments, and what kept him going. ExWeb's Correne Coetzer caught up with Tyler while he enjoys his nine-month-old son.

ExplorersWeb: Did the expedition work out like you planned it to be? Did you get any surprises?

Well, we made it to the pole, so of course I think it worked out, and there were a few surprises. The drift caught us by surprise a little bit, which over time resulting in our last dash to the North Pole.

While we were happy with 97% of our equipment choices, I don't think you're ever really sure how all the pieces are going to function together until you're putting everything together. The Arctic Ocean can be beautiful at any moment.

ExplorersWeb: How did your food and fuel work out?

We had enough food for a meal at the pole, and we ended the expedition with an extra liter of fuel (at least 2 days worth), which is remarkable considering how worried we were about our fuel consumption in the middle of the expedition. It's really hard to judge some things on a long expedition - you have to constantly assess, try, trust and then repeat that again and again.

ExplorersWeb: We know you craved among other food a Fat Boy Burger. What was the best on your menu on the ice?

Our menu did not have a lot of variety to it, although it's amazing how far four flavors of fudge will take you! I grew tired of the nuts we had with us for lunch snacks, but the biggest surprise was that we always liked our dinner and breakfast. Our pemmican never failed us, and I would recommend it for taste, effectiveness, simplicity and flexibility.

ExplorersWeb: You didn't have a rest day. How did that affect you?

The two of us are used to long hours, day after day, but really it's hard to say. Would we not have reached the pole had we taken a rest day, or would the rest and reflection have energized us? You never really know. In the future I'd try to make myself rest early on at an opportune moment.

ExplorersWeb: What was your scariest moment?

The first open lead we encountered took a lot out of us. It was a cold, windy day. I was emotionally drained and wanted nothing to do with it as soon as we could get away.

I took some risks then that scared me; that's when I went in the water to my knees and then clung to the icy wall of the side of the lead thinking, "Okay, that was dumb." But I knew the ice a lot better after that. Risk has its rewards.

ExplorersWeb: What kept you going when things were tough?

In general I have a pretty consistent drive. I make small goals and stick to them. I distract myself with memories, songs and daydreams of the future. (Hard for me to imagine such an expedition without that ability.)

The big surprise was how supported we felt on this "unsupported" expedition. That was life changing. Family, friends and strangers all teamed up to be an amazing source of endurance.

ExplorersWeb: What was your best moment?

Reaching the pole was a proud moment. The last day was gorgeous, one of the best of the trip.

Day 25 sticks out, though, that was when the two of us reached the point in the expedition when we could really embrace being there, present and in the moment, almost play with it a bit. I

wrote about it in the blog, "Who's living better than us?"

ExplorersWeb: You worked well together as a team. Why, would you say?

Teamwork is not new to either of us. We trusted each other out there. That's the most important thing. I owe that to our communication and general commitment to each other and to success.

Nothing is better than delayed gratification, and that's what these expeditions are all about! You feel satisfied if you work hard knowing that at some point in your day you will be rewarded, however briefly.

ExplorersWeb: Do you and John plan any further expeditions and you perhaps the South Pole?

There will always be other expeditions of one type or another. It's an ingrained part of who I am. Right now I will focus on fatherhood and being home. I also think it's important to sit with this achievement for a bit and tease the meaning out of it.

ExplorersWeb: How do you feel at the moment if you look back at all the preparation and the expedition itself?

What a question! It took an immense amount of work to get the point of landing at Ward Hunt Island. Once on the ice we used completely different skills to reach the pole.

I'm so thankful for all of the kind words and encouraging actions of anyone and everyone who helped make this a reality.

ExplorersWeb: Any advice for anybody who wants to ski to the North Pole?

Our complimentary pace and our consistent routines were essential. Routines are important because they are something objective that you can focus on. They're not personal.

It's very important to know your own needs and systems. If they're really well tested, trust them. Don't panic and try a lot of new things.

The Arctic Ocean is unique, but all the normal concepts of expeditionary travel apply - as do the laws of physics. Be gentle with each other. Life gets tough.

ExplorersWeb: Anything you want to add?

I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts. I've benefited so much from others. Thank you.

Tyler Fish and John Huston became the first Americans to ski unsupported, unassisted to the North Pole. They arrived at the Pole on 25 April 2009 after sledge-hauling 54 days from Ward Hunt Island, Canada.

Tyler Fish, born in 1973, lives in Ely, Minnesota, about 10 miles from Canada. For work he spends most of his time with Outward Bound and coaching cross country skiing. Tyler said his wife is very understanding of his outdoor adventure interests, “as she is a canoeist and veteran of a 100-day dogsled expedition across Arctic Canada. My five-month old son doesn’t have a clue what I’m up to, but he will. I miss him already,” said Tyler before the North Pole expedition in February.

Hobbies... “of all my outdoor pursuits I reserve telemark skiing as a purely pleasurable pastime, not linked to work or expeditions in any way. As for music, I enjoy a variety of it, and the more I can sing with it the better. I can never remember the last good book or movie...but I know I saw or read something that felt good....”

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