



When Shakespeare wrote, “And though she be but little, she is fierce,” he could easily have been referring to Sasha DiGiulian.

Standing at 5’2”, the 24-year-old American rock climber’s strength should not be underestimated. She’s the first American woman to climb grade 9a and she’s finished multiple climbs of 5.14—for the non-experts, 5.15 is the hardest climb ever completed by someone.

We recently had the chance to watch her scale the wall at Chicago’s Brooklyn Boulders for the launch of the new Red Bull Purple Edition and Red Bull Lime Edition. And she took a break from her 3,000-feet-a-day climbing routine to catch up with us about tips for mastering her sport, compartmentalizing fear and dating.

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What’s your favorite thing about climbing?

It’s probably two-fold. I have made some amazing friends and I feel like I have a global community anywhere I go because climbing is a sport in which you can travel around the world and connect with people over this overarching passion. And also climbing is the one place where all of the chaos of my external world is silenced and I’m solely focused on the moment in front of me.

Why does your partnership with Red Bull make sense?

Red Bull is an amazing partnership because the brand really supports going out and creating something new. And it really puts a lot of effort and emphasis on creativity, as well as pushing new boundaries. In climbing, that's a goal of mine—to really set out and explore what I'm capable of achieving.

When you get up on a wall, thousands of feet in the air, how do you keep your nerves calm?

I develop certain mantras for myself like "you can" or "just go," when I have moments of hesitation. But it's also classifying fear into rational and irrational categories. When is the fear appropriate to have and when is the fear just overexposure or feeling insecure about a situation that you're actually perfectly safe in?

**Have you had any really gnarly falls?**

I have had some gnarly falls. I've broken the L4 vertebrae in my back and I have had to overcome a pretty bad back injury this year, which was definitely not fun because I'm so used to having exercise as a part of my daily life... Not even being able to move without pain was definitely crippling and it made me really appreciate just daily activity.

How often do you train in the gym?

I train six days a week, inside and outside. It really depends which part of my season I'm in.

When it comes to fitness, how important is it to find something that you like doing?**How does that help you stick with it?**

I think that having fun is the key ingredient of success. For fitness, what you enjoy doing is

what you're going to gravitate toward more often. So if you're trying to accomplish fitness goals, find enjoyment through those fitness goals and do something that engages you but you don't feel like sacrifices something else.

What tips would you give to a beginner climber? Can anybody do this sport?

I would say that the best place to begin climbing if you're in an urban location is going to your local climbing gym. In the last three years, the climbing gym industry has exploded 400 percent, so there are literally gyms everywhere. I would also say go into climbing with a positive attitude. You won't necessarily succeed the first time because it is a sport that's pretty unique in the way that it requires muscles that you may have never used before—like in your fingers and in your forearm tendons.



Would you say that climbing could be a fun date idea?

I do see first dates out at the climbing gym. You want to make sure the person you take on a

climbing date is adventurous and sporty because, if not, they may not necessarily enjoy it. But it can be a great activity and certainly gives you something to talk about.

What's your ideal date?

My ideal date is not at a climbing gym—ha! That's where I work out! I actually really like dates where I go out and do something fun. Maybe it's an activity or a sport outside or going to a location I haven't been to.

Do you look to be with a person who is active?

I definitely need to be with someone who is really passionate about something. One of the pillars in my life has been having climbing as this really central component that I dedicate and commit a lot of energy toward, and when I connect with other people, I'm able to connect well if they're passionate about something. It doesn't need to be climbing or a sport per say, just something.