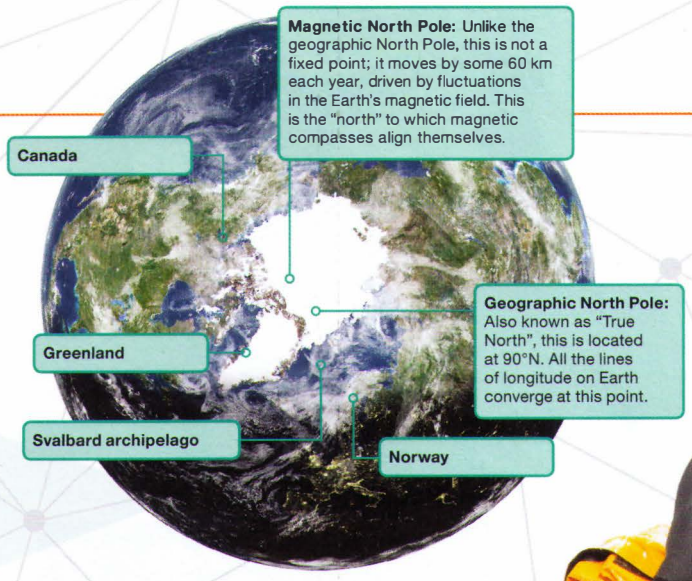

THREE POLES CHALLENGE

First woman to complete the Three Poles Challenge
Sweden's Tina Sjögren reached the North Pole on 29 May 2002 with her husband Thomas. She had summitted Everest on 26 May 1999 and reached the South Pole on 1 Feb 2002. The couple's two polar journeys also mark the **fastest time to reach both poles unsupported**.

First person to complete the Three Poles Challenge without the use of oxygen on Everest
As of Mar 2014, the only person to complete the Three Poles Challenge unsupported and without the use of supplementary oxygen is Antoine de Choudens (FRA), who accomplished this breath-taking feat from 25 Apr 1996 to 10 Jan 1999.

Fastest time to complete the Three Poles Challenge
The shortest time taken to reach the three extreme points on Earth is 1 year 217 days by Adrian Hayes (UK). He summitted Everest on 25 May 2006, reached the North Pole on 25 Apr 2007 (from Ward Hunt Island, Canada), and claimed the South Pole, journeying from the Hercules Inlet in western Antarctica, on 28 Dec 2007.

The **fastest time to complete the Three Poles challenge by a woman** is 1 year 336 days, and was accomplished by Cecilie Skog (NOR). She summitted Mount Everest on 23 May 2004, reached the South Pole on 27 Dec 2005, and got to the North Pole on 24 Apr 2006.

Fastest journey from the North Pole to land (unsupported, unassisted)

In 1895, Fridtjof Nansen and Hjalmar Johansen (both NOR) almost became the first people to reach the North Pole, but were forced to retreat at 86°14'N. In 2012, Audun Tholfsen (NOR) and Timo Palo (EST), pictured right, set out on what would have been Nansen and Johansen's return route. The duo left the North Pole on 23 Apr 2012. Using skis and kayaks, but no external support or re-supplies, they negotiated 1,150 km (715 mi) of drifting ice and curious polar bears to reach Phippsøya island, in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, 55 days later. They arrived at Longyearbyen, Svalbard, on 3 Jul, having covered 1,620 km (1,060 mi) in all.

"Our carbon paddles were lightweight, but durable. The sharp blade helped us to cut through thin ice layers and make a channel."

"This small outdoor weather station allowed us to measure wind speed, temperature, air pressure and humidity. It was also of some help to us in predicting the weather."

"A very simple and ordinary GPS. It's lightweight and consumes less energy than those with colour maps. In the Arctic Ocean, there is no need for GPS maps: there is nothing to be mapped."

"Ski goggles protect the eyes and part of the face in harsh weather conditions. The yellow and red lenses also enhance contrast and give a better definition in overcast and white-out conditions."

"A waterproof 'spray skirt' covers the cockpit and prevents water from getting in when we paddle in high winds and heavy waves."

"To protect our hands from the wind and cold, weatherproof mittens are a must."

"Waterproof Gore-Tex dry suits made paddling through the freezing cold Arctic waters both comfortable and safe."

"For some reason, we managed to break all our plastic spoons. So we had to improvise and combine new ones from the leftovers."

"A sledge, rather than this kayak, would have been more appropriate to pull across the sea-ice of the Arctic Ocean. But we needed it to cross the large open areas of water at the later stages of the expedition in order to get on land and continue along the fjords."

"This type of camping stove is simple and sturdy – exactly what you need in the Arctic Ocean. It is such a crucial part of our gear that we had a spare."