

CH>RITY  
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

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# BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

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VIETNAM EXPERIENCE  
VIETNAM

Thu 07 Apr - Mon 18 Apr 2011





## In aid of your choice of charity

07 Apr - 18 Apr 2011

### 12 DAYS | VIETNAM | CHALLENGING

This 450km cycle ride begins in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi and travels down to Ho Chi Minh City in the south. After a day spent exploring Hanoi, we head for Hué, which is dominated by majestic temples, ancient tombs, and the imperial citadel. Onwards to Hoi An, a sixteenth century trading town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Culture and history abound here, as you will see at the next destination: My Son, formerly an Imperial city during the Cham dynasty. From here nature takes its course, as we pass by the Marble Mountains to Danang and then towards the miles of prime beaches at Nha Trang. While there, the group will visit an SOS Childrens' Village which Charity Challenge supports as part of its commitment to local communities. Finally, we arrive in Ho Chi Minh City, with plenty of time to celebrate our incredible achievement.

- Cycle 450kms off the beaten track across Vietnam
- Visit Hué, home to majestic temples and ancient tombs
- UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hoi An
- Imperial Cham city of My Son
- Miles of prime beach at Nha Trang

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 Thu 07 Apr

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#### International departure from London

Our journey begins at the airport where we'll meet our teammates and Charity Challenge representative. Any last minute nerves will turn to excitement as we touch down in Hanoi after the overnight flight.

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### DAY 2 Fri 08 Apr

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#### Visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Explore Hanoi's Old Quarter

After transferring to our hotel, we have the day to explore Vietnam's capital city. Our city tour takes in Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, his old residence, one pillar pagoda and the Old Quarter. Time permitting, we will squeeze in a bike fitting and ride around Hanoi – otherwise this will be done tomorrow. All important is the full trip briefing, followed by team dinner and overnight in hotel.

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### DAY 3 Sat 09 Apr

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#### Ride around outskirts of Hanoi, then catch overnight train (approximately 35kms)

Early risers may join our tour guide for lakeside Tai Chi. After breakfast the group heads off to the city's outskirts for a morning ride that stretches along the Red River. Lunch will be back at the hotel, after which the afternoon is free. After an early dinner, we depart for the train station for an overnight train to Hué.

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### DAY 4 Sun 10 Apr

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#### Explore Hué and the surrounding countryside (approximately 45kms)

After the long journey, we have breakfast at our hotel. Once the bikes are ready, we cycle into town and across the perfumed river to Hué's Imperial Citadel, to be explored on foot. We then ride to the Mausoleums of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh on part dirt tracks, part country lanes. The ride continues to the Thien Mu Pagoda, before returning to Hué for the night.

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### DAY 5 Mon 11 Apr

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#### Hue to Hoi An (approximately 100kms)

After a short transfer we ride for 40kms along a picturesque, peninsular road from Thuan An beach to Vinh Loc. We then board a ferry to cross the Perfume River. Following two moderate climbs, we cruise down to Lang Co Beach for lunch before tackling Hai Van. Time permitting, we pedal on towards Danang from where we will be transferred to UNESCO World Heritage Site Hoi An.

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### DAY 6 Tue 12 Apr

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#### Hoi An to My Son Cham Towers to Hoi An (approximately 60kms)

The route from Hoi An to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, My Son Sanctuary, is along traffic-free surfaced track

through paddy fields. Thereafter, there is a 4km hill. Approaching the towers along the Song Tranh River, the road becomes rocky and steep, requiring motorbike support for around 12kms. Following a picnic lunch, transfer back to Hoi An for the night.

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#### DAY 7 Wed 13 Apr

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#### Hoi An to Danang to Nha Trang (approximately 30kms)

Yesterday's hard work is rewarded with a leisurely breakfast and some free time. It's then back in the saddle and through the Marble Mountains to Danang, from where we catch a flight to Nha Trang. Upon arrival, the group will check in at a hotel. The rest of the afternoon is then free to explore or relax before dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight in hotel.

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#### DAY 8 Thu 14 Apr

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#### Nha Trang to Dalat (approximately 100kms)

It's an early start before transferring to Khanh Vinh. The day begins with 25kms on flat road, then it's up all the way. The ascent exceeds 1,000m, but it is possible to conquer with determination, a steady pace and the gears. We will be travelling along quiet and shady roads towards Bi Doup National Park, and eventually the popular Vietnamese holiday spot of Dalat. Overnight in hotel.

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#### DAY 9 Fri 15 Apr

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#### Ride around Dalat and towards Ho Chi Minh City (approximately 80kms)

Early start for a morning ride around Dalat. En route we visit a flower farm and later push on for a fast downhill ride. From here it's a five to six-hour transfer to Ho Chi Minh City, arriving in the evening. Although recognized as Ho Chi Minh City, the people of Vietnam still lovingly refer to it as Saigon. Team dinner in town and overnight in hotel.

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#### DAY 10 Sat 16 Apr

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#### Saigon to Cu Chi Tunnels and back, followed by a free afternoon (approximately 25kms)

At Cu Chi we explore the network of tunnels, engineered and used by the native Viet Cong fighters. Then it's a 25km ride along country roads to the city. Here we have the rest of the afternoon free to browse the central Ben Thanh market, visit the War Remnants Museum or take a leisurely ride. Now the hard work is complete, it's time for a celebratory dinner.

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#### DAY 11 Sun 17 Apr

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#### Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to Tan Son Nhat airport

There's still time for some last minute exploring and souvenir shopping in the vibrant centre of Ho Chi Minh City. Later, we transfer to Tan Son Nhat Airport for our overnight flight back to the UK.

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#### DAY 12 Mon 18 Apr

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### Arrival in UK

We touch down on home turf, full of pride over our achievements. Saying goodbye to your new-found friends will be hard, so make sure to exchange contact details.

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### NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.  
The costs below are per person.

### SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £475.00 when you book

Then a balance of £1709.00 (8 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

### MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £475.00 when you book

Raise a minimum of £3575.00 for your charity.

### FLEXI

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Registration fee of £475.00 when you book

Then £475.00 towards challenge costs (8 weeks before your challenge)

Raise a minimum of £2520.00 for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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### On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- All challenge management before, during and post event

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

**Before you go**

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

**THE DETAILS**

## Fundraising deadlines

You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 27/01/2011), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 16/05/2011). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.

## Prices include all known air taxes

We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.

## Typical group size

The typical group size is 12 - 25 participants

## Travel insurance

Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. Charity Challenge has chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine (for UK residents) and Rise & Shield\* (for non-UK residents). Both companies can arrange cover for an extensive number of activities, such as high-altitude trekking and cycling events, which include emergency medical treatment and repatriation expenses. Please note that Charity Challenge is not able to advise on matters relating to individual travel insurance policies and does not accept any liability for policy matters or claims. Full details including costs may be found at <https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge> and <https://riseandshield.com/partners/charity-challenge/> \* Rise and Shield do not provide cover to Cuba.

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**PHIAN THET BEACH EXTENSION – £335.0**

- Registration fee £50.0
- Balance £285.0
  
- Single Room £125.0



### Level of Difficulty

The Cycle Vietnam challenge is graded as **moderate**. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, but perhaps haven't taken on a strenuous challenge event before and are hoping to push themselves out of their comfort zone.

You can tell your supporters that on your Vietnam cycle Challenge you will be:

- Cycling for around 6-8 hours per day, covering approximately 450kms over 7 days.
- Battling the heat and humidity. Temperatures can reach the 30s.
- Cycling across waterways, plantations and on unpaved and dusty roads.

### Money

**Currency:** The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). We recommend exchanging currency before you go, although there are ATMs and currency exchanges available at Hanoi Airport. For up to date currency exchange see [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

**Credit Cards:** Visa and Mastercard are now accepted in many hotels and shops, but the preferred currency is cash. You should bring a credit card in case of emergency, but please check any applicable charges with your bank.

**ATMs:** You will have access to ATMs in the main cities in Vietnam, but please bring cash for the rural areas that you will be staying in.

**How much to bring:** All accommodation and meals are included within the price of the trip, as well as water during the days of your cycling challenge. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, but as there are daily opportunities to buy soft drinks, alcohol and snacks on the way we would suggest a maximum amount of about £15 a day (in local currency). Bring more if you intend to buy souvenirs and take up the opportunity of the additional things you can do during your time in Vietnam. There are plenty of great craft souvenirs, silk clothing and silver jewellery in Vietnam. Keep this in mind!

**Tipping:** Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff is paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture and local guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. If you choose to tip, we would suggest an amount of \$120-\$150 per participant for the duration of the challenge. For those on Charity Challenge organised extension, we would suggest between \$6-\$8 per person per day.

### Visa

UK citizens do not require a visa to enter Vietnam for a period of fewer than 15 days. This visa exemption will last until the 30th June 2016. You must hold a full ten year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge, and at least one blank page for your visas and entry/exit stamps.

If you wish to remain in Vietnam over 15 days, you will have to apply for a regular visa depending on your travel plans. You can download a visa form and all of the information about the visas on the embassy's website: [www.vietnamembassy.org.uk](http://www.vietnamembassy.org.uk).

## Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website:

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements.

Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting in Vietnam and Cambodia, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

## Flights

You will be flying from London Heathrow to Hanoi and back from Ho Chi Minh. The flying time is approx. 14-15 hours indirect. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact [flights@charitychallenge.com](mailto:flights@charitychallenge.com) for further assistance). For more general flights questions, please refer to our main [FAQ](#) page.

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#).

## Group Size

Each group is intended to be 16 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 30 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 12 to 15 people by charging a small group supplement of £75, which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

## Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous local support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

## Climate

While hot and often humid, Vietnam has a tropical climate, and so you may experience tropical rain and very occasionally storms. During the wet season it can be very humid. From November to April, the north is cool and dry, while May to October is hot and rainy. The rainy season lasts from May to November. The temperature in Hanoi can range from 17 degrees in January to 30 degrees in June.

### Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. If we find somebody is unable to cycle at all, then we can transport them from one location to the next.

**It is policy that participants must wear a helmet** – please take your own for comfort reasons. Be aware that cycling can be dangerous and accidents do happen – you must take responsibility for your own safety whilst riding. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by. If for any reason any injury should occur, a relief vehicle will be made available. The relief vehicle will be a private air-conditioned bus, minibus or jeep that will support the riding throughout the tour. It will follow at a discreet distance, and is there for clients who need to rest, to carry the spare bike parts, and will also often contain refreshments such as water, snacks and soft drinks. During transfer sections, the bikes will be carried in the bus. When riding off road on single track trails support will sometimes be by motorbike. The guide will carry water and the first aid kit with him/her until the trail joins the main track where the bus will be waiting.

### Terrain

Your cycle terrain will be fairly flat for the whole cycle; however, please do not underestimate the length of the days as you will regularly be covering distances of 70-90km each day. Some areas of the cycle will be very exposed and with extreme heat and humidity, which will be a challenge in itself. Please ensure that you drink plenty of fluids and protect yourself from the sun. The cycle paths will be narrow and you will be navigating a variety of paths, including along the coastal line, so practice in efficient gear changing is recommended.

### Luggage Allowance and Valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Cycle Vietnam challenge you should only need around 15kg-17kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. For any valuables, safe deposit boxes are usually provided to use in the hotels. Use a padlock on your luggage when in transit to reduce any risks. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

### Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as

the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information please visit our [Responsible Tourism pages](#).

### Typical Day

During your cycling days you will wake at around 7am, have breakfast and start cycling for 6-8 hours. We will stop at shady rest stops every 15-20km where you can rest and regroup. Here you will be able to re-energise with fruit snacks and fill water bottles. For lunch you will stop at a local restaurant or beauty spot for a picnic lunch. In the evening there is usually an hour or so free time before we meet to discuss the next day's adventure. Dinner follows the briefing.

### Accommodation

The standard of accommodation in Vietnam is generally very high. All rooms are en-suite and have facilities for changing batteries, as well as WIFI connection. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please note this where appropriate when booking or email [challenges@charitychallenge.com](mailto:challenges@charitychallenge.com)

### Food & Drink

Food in Vietnam is a delight. It is a blend of Thai and Chinese food, and is always freshly cooked with plenty of vegetables. Typical Vietnamese dishes include pho, a type of rice noodle soup eaten for breakfast, cha gio, deep fried spring rolls, and goi ngo sen, a delicious salad made with lotus stems, shrimps and peanuts. The dishes are all very tasty and different and for the most part not too spicy. Food is usually prepared with a minimum of oil and served with a fish sauce called nuoc mam. Saigon/Hanoi are the local brews. Wines are very expensive unless you want to sample locally made rice win - 'Roau' (pronounced zeeo). Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies. You will need to be somewhat flexible with your eating habits when travelling in SE Asia, however, as some diets are hard to cater for! Water will be supplied while you cycle. Please note that you may encounter a large amount of seafood on this challenge so please inform Charity Challenge of your dietary requirements if you do not eat seafood so we can accommodate you the best we can.

### Bike Information

The bikes are good quality lightweight Trek 4300, 4500 and 4700 - 24 & 27 SPD mountain bikes with Shimano Deore components, V Brakes and front suspension. All bikes have water bottle carriers and quickly detachable wheels. If you would like to bring your own spare inner tube, the valve systems are Presta 26" x 1.8 or Schrader. On arrival you will be asked to sign a waiver issued by our local groundhandler on arrival in case of incident caused by yourselves.

## Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, helmet and comfortable foot wear for your cycling will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some good quality padded cycling shorts. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality gore-tex waterproof jacket and technical/Dry fit t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Cycling gloves, and cotton scarf or buff are also highly recommended, protecting you from the dust. A full kit list for this challenge can be found [here](#), and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoor Hire and Cotswold Outdoor.

## Toilets

This range from very basic during the cycling route, to normal western standards in the accommodation. There will be en-suite toilet and washing facilities at the hotels. Remember bringing with you some tissue as you might find it difficult to find during your cycling route.

## Phone and WiFi

Most of the accommodation you are in will have limited WiFi which you will be able to use, but please do not rely upon this, as internet connections are not always reliable. You will have phone signal in almost all places on the challenge.

## Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

In terms of your Cycle Vietnam challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The cycling route is very exposed, with almost no shade, and on sunny days the temperatures can soar. You should ideally be wearing a sun hat, sun cream, and hydrating constantly!
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Vietnam, and as such some of the hotels we use do not have them in place. Your leader will explain the emergency fire procedures to you.
- Vietnam is a region where still today, a high number of unexploded land mines are being found every day. Don't wander off well-trodden paths. You could encounter forgotten land mines and undetonated munitions. Never touch a leftover grenade or mine!

## Training

Training is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and

balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. Don't forget that the temperature and climate is different to the UK and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days – the heat and distance will be your biggest challenge. You need to be able to sustain around 6-8 hours of cycling for 7 continuous days, so if you can then replicating this over a weekend would be fantastic training. In your members area you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes in your members' area. You can also look to join one of our training weekends

### Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more [here](#)

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE

**Any more questions?**

Contact us:

+ 44 (0)20 8346 0500

[info@charitychallenge.com](mailto:info@charitychallenge.com)

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