

**Muscular  
Dystrophy UK**

Fighting muscle-wasting conditions



**TRIP NOTES**

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# **BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE**

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**INVOLVE AVENUE OF THE  
VOLCANOES  
ECUADOR**

Wed 19 Nov - Sun 30 Nov 2014





## In aid of Muscular Dystrophy UK

19 Nov - 30 Nov 2014



### 12 DAYS | ECUADOR | EXTREME

This beautiful trek is not for the faint-hearted as it culminates in a magical midnight glacier climb. You will feel exhausted but elated as you rise with the sun, rewarded with priceless views over the Andes once you conquer Cayambe. The trek is at very high altitude, which means acclimatisation is vital. The trip will begin in Ecuador's capital Quito, giving the group time to feel comfortable with their surroundings before venturing off on the challenge of a lifetime. This action-packed itinerary meanders through rainforests and up and over volcanoes. Overall, however, our ultimate destination is the majestic Cayambe.

- Walk through the clouds as you conquer Cayambe
- Summit as the sun rises over Ecuador
- Gaze for miles over the magical Andes
- Meander through rainforests and up and around volcanoes
- Celebrate your achievements in the cultural capital Quito

## YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

### DAY 1 *Wed 19 Nov*

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#### **International departure from London**

Departure day has arrived and you may be filled with nerves and excitement you set off on this long-awaited expedition. As you say goodbye to family and friends, remember that this is what all the hard work has been for. The flight arrives in Quito – 2,800 metres above sea level. Here fears will fade away as new friendships are formed.

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### DAY 2 *Thu 20 Nov*

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#### **Arrival in Quito and acclimatization**

Today you will arrive in Quito in the morning and have the rest of the day to rest and acclimatize to the altitude.

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### DAY 3 *Fri 21 Nov*

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#### **Quito city tour and visit to the Equator**

Today is spent touring Quito in order to acclimatise. First stop is La Virgen De Quito, from where there is a panoramic view of the city and the setting of our challenge: the Avenue of the Volcanoes. We then head to Mitad del Mundo, a monument on the equator dividing the northern and southern hemispheres. Later the guide will run through a final check list before the challenge.

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### DAY 4 *Sat 22 Nov*

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#### **Summit Pasochoa volcano, 4,199m (approximately 7 hours)**

Today we drive towards our first hurdle, volcano Pasochoa. The trek meanders through lush rainforests, before continuing on to the volcano's narrow ridge. It's a steep climb, but team spirit will push you through to the summit. Return to Quito for dinner and overnight.

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### DAY 5 *Sun 23 Nov*

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#### **Summit Rucu Pichincha (4,696m) (approximately 8 hours)**

Hiking Rucu Pichincha is a relatively straight forward climb and very good for acclimatization

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### DAY 6 *Mon 24 Nov*

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#### **Guagua Pichincha (4,784 m) (approximately 6 hours)topaxi National Park (approximately 10-12 hours)**

The active caldera of the Pichinchas is on the western side of the Guagua Pichincha Mountain. Both peaks (Rucu and Guagua) are visible from the city of Quito and both are popular acclimatization climbs. Guagua Pichincha is usually accessed from the village of Lloa outside of Quito

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### DAY 7 *Tue 25 Nov*

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### Integral trekking (approximately 8 hours)

After an early breakfast, we start our 7-8 hour long high altitude (over 4,000m) trek, crossing the Pichinchas valley. This day there is no summit, however trekking at high altitude gives you a great acclimatization advantage. The trekking will end at the cable car, from where you will be picked up in order to continue towards Otavalo for overnight at the local hotel.

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### DAY 8 Wed 26 Nov

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### Fuya-Fuya (4,263m) (approximately 6 hours)

After breakfast, depart to Fuya-Fuya, located in the Mojanda paramo, an ecosystem where there are three beautiful lakes that originally formed part of glacial volcanoes. From the lakes we will start our hike towards the Fuya Fuya Mountain, and once we arrive to the top we have a short rest and a boxed lunch. We start our descent and drive back for overnight at a local hotel in Otavalo.

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### DAY 9 Thu 27 Nov

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### Cayambe Mountain Hut (4,700m)

Today will be a relaxed day. Enjoy some free time and leave with enough time to Cayambe Town for lunch. After lunch we start driving towards Cayambe's Hut (1 hour). Once we arrive, we get settled and if weather permits, we can do some ice practice in the afternoon and/or relax for the rest of the day.

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### DAY 10 Fri 28 Nov

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### Cayambe Ice practice

Today will be spent practising crampon and ice technique in preparation for tomorrow. Our guides will help to ensure we feel comfortable for the ultimate challenge of summiting Cayambe. There may be an afternoon walk, as we continue to acclimatise. Bedtime is early, as we try to sleep through nerves and excitement ahead of the moonlit start ahead.

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### DAY 11 Sat 29 Nov

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### Summit Cayambe, 5,790m (approximately 8 hours)

[The gruelling eight-hour climb begins at midnight. Along the way we face steep glaciers and sharp inclines of 30-40 degrees in extreme conditions. Roped up to our professional guides with crampons and ice axes, we reach the summit tired but triumphant. Feeling on top of the world, we'll descend through the clouds for lunch, before heading back to Quito for a real celebration.](#)

**NB: To climb Cayambe you can hire crampons, helmets, harnesses and ice axes from the local supplier, but please inform your operations manager eight weeks before the trek departs. They will then be brought out to you for the summit and glacier practice by the climb support team.**

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**DAY 12** *Sun 30 Nov*

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**Quito to London**

There will be free time on this final day to explore Quito and pick up some last minute souvenirs. The flight home is the perfect opportunity to reflect on all we've achieved, before sharing your fantastic journey with friends and family.

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**DAY 13** *Mon 01 Dec*

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**Arrive Home**

We arrive back as victors on home soil. From here it's a heartfelt goodbye to your new friends and trekking partners.

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**NB**

The volcanoes in Ecuador are volatile and as such the itinerary may change for reasons of volcanic activity, as well as the strength of the group, wildlife movements etc. The decision of your leader is final.

## HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

### SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £595.00 when you book

Then a balance of £2092.00

(8 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

### Before you go

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- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad & MASTA
- Access to "ask the expert" re your kit requirements
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- Template press release
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice

### 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
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking)

### On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in

or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)

- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

your Trip Notes

## THE DETAILS

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 16 - 20 participants

Small group supplement

The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 13-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by you. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary, and it will be added to your final balance of challenge costs invoice.

Optional extras

Business class upgrades\*  
 Travel insurance  
 Single room supplements\*  
 Extensions at end of trip\*  
 Trek/bike training weekends\*  
 (\*subject to availability)

## 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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### Level of Difficulty

The Avenue of the Volcanoes Challenge is graded as extreme. This challenge is tougher than Everest Basecamp and Kilimanjaro, and anyone undertaking this challenge should have experience with altitude trekking in extreme climates. Training and high levels of fitness and endurance are required.

During the Avenue of the Volcanoes challenge, you will be:

- Trekking between 6-8 hours a day
- Hiking everyday at altitudes above 4000 meters
- Reaching a maximum altitude of 5897 meters above sea level.
- Beginning your final summit attempt at approximately midnight and trekking for up to 12 hours.
- Using crampons and ice axes to reach the summit, over some inclines of 30-40 degrees.

### Money

**Currency:** The Ecuadorian currency is the US Dollar. They do not accept US \$100 bills, and lower denominations are advised. For up to date currency exchange, go to [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

**Credit Cards:** Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted in Quito, but will not be accepted in the rural challenge areas. Check with your bank regarding any charges applicable.

**ATMs:** ATM's are widely available in Quito, and you should ensure that you have enough cash with you for your trek.

**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 trek. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, and other than at the start and end of the challenge, you will be in rural areas away from any foreign exchanges or banks. You will only need money for tips, hiring specialist equipment, additional food & drink, gifts & souvenirs, departure tax and any additional activities outside of our itinerary.

**Tipping:** Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff are paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Ecuadorian guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. We recommend approx. US\$12 - US\$15 per person per day (approx. \$100--\$120) and this should be given to the challenge leader at the end of the challenge who will distribute it evenly amongst the support team.

### Visa

You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge. No visa is necessary for British Citizens for stays of up to 90 days. For citizens of other countries please check travel advice on the Ecuadorian embassy's website.

### 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 China, 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 Quito with a stopover via Bogota. The total flying time is approx. 18 hours. 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 Q&As page. Please note that an International Departure Tax of approximately \$56.66 (only cash is accepted) will be charged when leaving Quito.

### 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. Please ensure that your policy covers you for altitudes up to 6000 meters above sea level. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

### Group Size

Each group is intended to be 16 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 20 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 10 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 support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. All Ecuadorian guides are qualified members of the ASEGUM (Mountain Guides Association) and you will use these guides on Illiniza and Cayambe ascents.

The itinerary may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. While we will do our very best to maintain the advertised itinerary, we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that might occur. In all such circumstances, your challenge leader will have the final say and will act in the best interests of the group.

## Climate

You can expect Andean mountain weather throughout your challenge. Daytime weather can change from hot and clear with temperatures around 25 degrees centigrade to cold and damp with temperatures closer to zero. Night times, especially when high on Cayambe, will be very cold, with temperatures well below zero. You must be prepared for the worst, as mountain weather conditions are extremely unpredictable.

## Terrain

The route is mountainous, steep and uneven on all of the volcanoes. During your final summit attempt on Cayambe you will be using crampons and ice axes, roped up 2:1 with another participant and a guide. You will be given a day of technical training to teach you some of the skills required for glacier trekking, however you should be mentally prepared for the ascent as the gradients may reach up to 40 degrees.

## 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 Avenue of the Volcanoes 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 in Quito for guests' use in the hotels, but will not be available in campsites. 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, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

## A typical day

During the trekking days you will rise early and pack up before breakfast, then trek carrying only daypacks for 6-8 hours. There will be a picnic lunch on route and plenty of time to stop and view the remarkable scenery. The trekking area is remote and home to a wide array of rare flora and fauna. The evenings are spent in basic, though beautifully

located, camps and lodges where the food and facilities are fairly simple. On the summit night, you will rise at around midnight and arrive at the summit between 7 and 8am

### Accommodation

In Quito, the hotel will be a two to three star family run hotel, located near to the centre of town. Rooms are usually en-suite. During the trek we will be staying in mountain refuges and lodges with one night camping in two person dome tents (sharing with someone of the same sex). If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please ensure you submit this information at the time of booking or email [challenges@charitychallenge.com](mailto:challenges@charitychallenge.com)

Foam sleeping mats are provided, but do take your own if you require extra comfort. You should take a good four-season sleeping bag for the more basic refuges and camping. A four season with liner is ideal.

### Food & Drink

The food in Quito is varied. During the trek the food will be cooked on camp cookers and will be fairly simple. We cater for vegetarians, but please remember that Ecuador has a strong meat-eating culture and provision of vegetarian dishes is not as common or as comprehensive as in the UK. There will be plenty of soup to keep fluid intake high. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any dietary requirements or allergies.

### Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, well-worn in boots will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some really good quality walking socks. 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/wicking t-shirts rather than cotton shirts.

The climb of Cayambe entails walking on the glaciers of the volcano. You will therefore need to hire a pair of plastic boots with crampons, an ice axe, harness, helmet and karabiner. This will cost approx. £70 for the days required, and you will be given professional instruction on how to use the equipment, as well as half a day's practice before the climb. If you have feet smaller than size 36, or larger than 45, please advise us ASAP as boots may be difficult to hire.

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, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

### Cayambe Ascent

You will be roped up to a guide on a 2:1 ratio to summit Cayambe and as such if your trekking partner has to turn around for any reason (usually altitude sickness), you will also have to return with them. Our acclimatisation profile is designed to ensure maximum success, but it is likely that 1 or 2 members of the team will succumb to altitude related illnesses during the summit attempt. If you would like to hire your own guide for the summit, please let Charity Challenge know at no later than 2 months prior to departure, and we will advise you of any additional supplement.

## Toilets

Hotels in Quito provide ensuite facilities, as you would expect in the UK. In camp, toilets will be simple long drop toilets with bowls of water for washing.

## Phone and WiFi

You will have mobile phone and internet signal during your stay in Quito. After that, you will have extremely limited mobile phone or internet reception.

## Safety advice for the Avenue of the Volcanoes

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 Avenue of the Volcanoes Challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- You will be hiking at high altitude (above 4000 meters)
- You will be sleeping at altitudes between 3000 and 4000 meters
- You will be sleeping at local refuges during the trek.
- It will be very cold especially at nights, reaching down to below zero degrees
- You will be roped up to a guide on a 2:1 ratio to summit Cayambe and as such if your trekking partner has to turn around for any reason (usually altitude sickness), you will also have to return with them. You can avoid this by paying a supplement to hire your own guide if you would like.

## Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's walking 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. Back up support will never be far away and can be called in should there be an emergency. Contact will be maintained between guides and the support team where possible.

On Cayambe you will need to be roped up on a 2:1 ratio with a mountain guide. If you or your partner on the rope have to turn around on the mountain there is a chance that you will have to go down too as you cannot continue un-roped. If you want to have your own guide for Cayambe then this is available at an extra charge of around £225. If you would like to book this please do so by calling Charity Challenge no later than 8 weeks prior to departure.

## Training

Endurance training should be your primary focus. Begin slowly, without the weight of a pack, eventually adding weight

as you increase your training pace. Take long hikes (7-8hours) with a weighted pack, up and down hills or mountains (weight your pack with water containers and pour out the water before your descent to minimize knee stress).

Supplement this activity with running, cycling, and/or swimming, for additional aerobic conditioning. This challenge is regularly undertaken by people who have previously summited Kilimanjaro, who are surprised by the huge step up in terms of the level of mental and physical strength needed. 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](#)



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The best experience I have had! Tougher than Kilimanjaro, but more rewarding as well. The different experiences of the climbs undertaken will test your mental strength as well as your physical, but once you're on top, there's no other feeling like it.

Matt Kay

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The challenge was extreme and needed a lot of mental as well as physical effort. To reach the summits of all four volcanoes was incredible with each one being more emotional than the last.

Bob Chadwick

“

This was the toughest thing I have ever done, both physically and mentally. I have done Everest Base Camp, Half Marathon's, 10 mile runs and 10Ks but this is way above those in terms of the extent to which you will test yourself. You forget the pain when you see the top though. Well worth it!

Ewan Ross

# CH>RITY CH>LLENGE

## Any more questions?

Contact us:

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