

myLife

The magazine for people affected by
cardiomyopathy and myocarditis

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Paul's guaranteed to get a runner's high



In 2017, Paul helped put together a field of around 50 runners in the London Vitality 10k – making history for Cardiomyopathy UK with the charity's biggest team of running fundraisers to date.

Our community of fundraisers raise vital funds for our work through a variety of events, but Met Police sergeant Paul Hollis is taking running for Cardiomyopathy UK to new heights.

He has signed up for the Himalayan 100 Stage Race, which takes place over five days in November, with runners traversing isolated jungles, pine forests, villages and major rivers along a 100-mile course in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Paul is under no illusions how tough the race will be as right from Day 1, he'll face 24 miles of trail running with an altitude gain of more than 10,000ft.

"In all honesty, I'm somewhere between excited and terrified about it and realise how much I've taken on when I see people's reactions when I tell them!" he admitted.

Paul started running in 2010 after a knee injury prevented him doing contact sports and martial arts. That same year, he ran his first half-marathon for Cardiomyopathy UK after a friend's stepfather was diagnosed with the condition.

"That started my friendship with Cardiomyopathy UK," said Paul, who ran his first marathon for the charity three years later. "I have met some lovely people along the way and having realised what Cardiomyopathy UK does, I have kept you as my charity of choice."

Today, with a further 18 marathons under his belt, the 46-year-old is taking on his most ambitious challenge after his friend Sarah Russell told him about the Himalayan 100, which she completed in 2014.

"I help Sarah coach her running group in my home town of Tunbridge Wells and in return, she's been generous with advice and support," said Paul.

"Training for the Himalayas means I need to up my mileage and I've done nine marathons this year alone as 'training runs' and been to the altitude centre in London to see how I cope with the lack of air."

Today, the 46-year-old is taking on his most ambitious challenge, after his friend Sarah Russell told him about the Himalayan 100



Paul also supplements his average weekly running mileage of around 30 miles with 35-mile bike rides to Southwark Police Station before starting his night shifts.

"I'm getting used to running back-to-back days to give my legs an idea what I'm in for. However, my shift work makes it hard to have a strict training plan, so I can sometimes be found running on the treadmill in the middle of the night!"

The Himalayan 100 has been called the most scenic race in the world as runners take in panoramic views of Mount Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, and Kanchenjunga – four out of five of the world's highest peaks – and despite the rigours of his planning and preparation, Paul knows he'll enjoy a real runner's high when he catches sight of them.

› **Runner on the trail that has been called the Most Scenic Race in the World.**

Look out for a follow-up interview with Paul in our next issue of My Life.

