

JERRY GORE - K2 DIABETES CHALLENGE

60-year-old with Type 1 Diabetes takes on world's toughest mountain

A mountaineer is aiming to become the first Briton with diabetes to climb the second highest mountain in the world this summer.

Jerry Gore, 60, will be the oldest person with the condition to ever summit K2, a mountain that has 95% fewer successful ascents than Everest. It has only been climbed once before by someone with diabetes.

Jerry will leave for Pakistan on 14th June 2021 with climbing-partner Rick Allen, 65, one of UK's most distinguished and experienced mountaineers. They will climb without the use of supplementary oxygen.

Jerry Gore has Type 1 Diabetes, an autoimmune condition that stops your body from producing insulin - the hormone that allows cells to absorb glucose.

He must inject insulin 5-times a day and runs the risk of his insulin freezing in -40C weather on the mountain.

Jerry said: "Like all those who live with a physical or mental illness, I am only disabled by the way society views me. My health issues are mine to conquer and deal with, but not to be judged by.

"K2 represents my mountaineering dream and I will not let diabetes hold me back from my ambitions. I believe we are defined by what we do, not by the challenges we face.

"In 2020 Covid-19 left me feeling overwhelmed. So, I decided to take some action and do something positive, rather than just sit on my bum and count grams of carbohydrates. That is why I organised my K2 Diabetes Challenge.

"I am world-class at making excuses. We all are. But sometimes when you set yourself a challenge you can achieve targets you never thought you honestly could. It is incredibly rewarding as you start dictating to life, rather than just let it kick you around.

"Diabetes is NOT an excuse!"

THE CLIMB

K2 is within the 8000m "Death Zone". Here, the human body cannot function properly due to low oxygen levels.

It takes 8-9 days to walk the 90km to base camp, as you climb a long tortuous glacier full of dusty rock rubble and ice. It is very easy to twist your ankle on the rough, constantly changing trail. There is zero habitation en route so you have to pitch camp every night and sleep in tents on rough ground.

On K2 the climbing is very varied, involving ice, rock and mixed alpine terrain and involves the use of ice axes and crampons. There are notorious sections such as House's Chimney and the Black Pyramid, that are like rock climbs with crampons on.

The weather on K2 is very unpredictable because its isolated position means it attracts its own weather systems. Wind speeds can exceed 150Km/h and temperatures on the mountain can drop to as low as -50C.

In 2019, 100 climbing permits were issued for K2 and 30 summits were recorded. On Mt Everest in 2019 1136 permits were given, with 876 summit successes. K2 is only 237 meters lower than Mt Everest yet far more technical, dangerous and arduous.

Jerry will be climbing with Rick Allen, one of the most successful high-altitude climbers the UK has ever produced. In 2013 Rick climbed the Mazeno Ridge over 18 days on Nanga Parbat (8,126m.) earning the pair a Piolet D'Or (Golden Ice axe) – the mountaineering equivalent of the Oscars.

The expedition is 7-weeks long and yet the team plan to spend just 5 days on the mountain, once acclimatised, due to its dangerous slopes.

THE CONDITION

Jerry was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2001 aged 40. If his blood sugar levels drop too low, he can fall into a coma. If his levels go too high he runs the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). When this happens, life-threatening substances called ketones build up in the body.

He must inject insulin regularly and be very careful with his sugar intake to keep his blood glucose levels stable. He will have to regularly test his sugar levels and inject insulin on the climb.

He will be using both fast acting and slow acting analogue insulins – Humalog and Levemir – as well as the Ascensia Contour Next glucometer. He will have to inject and test his blood sugar levels throughout the expedition, especially on summit day.

In order to test and inject in temperatures as low as -40C Jerry has developed a system of specialised equipment and insulation pouches carried next to the skin. He will use extra-long syringe needles so he can inject through clothing and glucometers that are durable and function in temperatures from +35C down to - 40C.

More information on Type 1 Diabetes: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/type-1-diabetes>

A useful guide to media reporting on Type 1 Diabetes: [HERE](#)

JERRY GORE - BIOGRAPHY

Jerry Gore crossed the Iceland icecap in 1977 when he was 16, summited Mont Blanc aged 17 and climbed a 7000-meter giant Manaslu North in the Himalayas aged 22.

He became an officer in the Royal Marines after completing his Green Beret Commando test with a broken ankle, and then spent three winters developing major ice climbing areas in Arctic Norway. It was here that he was awarded the Commandant General's personal commendation - the most outstanding Royal Marine - in 1984 for rescuing Norwegian civilians.

Jerry holds the UK's fastest time for the North Face of The Eiger in under 8 hours, and has climbed on expeditions with climbing-greats including Sir Chris Bonington and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston.

In 2003 he set up AlpBase.com offering chalet accommodation in the Southern French Alps and runs outdoor courses for schools. In 2014 he co-founded [Action4Diabetes \(A4D\)](#), which now supports over 530 disadvantaged young people with T1D in six countries across SE Asia.

Since 2004, Jerry has been a diabetes ambassador for the IDF (The International Diabetes Federation). He was nominated a Blue Circle Champion by the IDF in 2015.

PRESS IMAGES / FURTHER INFORMATION

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_fXc0WVxlgpEYn-wWJc0AeAzR9AOWre6?usp=sharing

Jerry is happy to be interviewed about the expedition.

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