

CHARITY CHAMPIONS

Mountain

Family man's climbing quest is inspired by his loving wife

A fundraiser is planning to climb the highest freestanding mountain in the world to help his wife's rare liver disease

Matt Walmsley, 41 of Bamber Bridge will swap Lancashire for the African plains next month to climb, Mt Kilimanjaro as he embarks on the ultimate challenge to raise money and awareness for PSC Support.

Joined on his quest by three friends he hopes to raise more than £4,000 by summiting Mount Kilimanjaro during an eight day attempt to conquer the mountain between June 17 and 24.

Matt said: "I decided to take on in this challenge for PSC Support because my wife Martine suffers from Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC), a rare and little understood liver disease.

"When Martine was diagnosed our daughter Sophie was just 15 months old we were given a very grim prognosis and almost no information about the disease or its care let alone where you could get help and support.

"It was an exceptionally scary and distressing time for us all and the future was very uncertain. Martine once described having PSC as 'living with a time bomb in your chest and not know-

ing when it'll go off'. Through the work of PSC Support we became better informed and they helped us come to terms with Martine's PSC.

"I now want to help such support to be available to others so they don't have to go through the emotional trauma Martine and I experienced. I'm also keen help PSC Support fund vital medical research toward treatments and ultimately a cure for PSC.

"I can't wait to start my Kilimanjaro attempt as I've always has an adventurous streak and used to enjoy adventure sports in my younger years.

"However in recently times I became more of a couch potato, my fitness disappeared and weight ballooned up to a clinically obese 18 stone.

"So I've had plenty of work to do to get into shape.

"I've been preparing myself for the attempt through improving my diet, exercising at the gym and getting plenty of training hikes in.

"I've lost over three stone of weight, I'm significantly fitter and feel I'll be ready for the challenge even though I expect it's going to be the toughest thing I've ever done."

He added: "The challenge is self-funded so it's great to know that every single step I



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take up Kilimanjaro and every pound of sponsorship will be helping to support PSC sufferer and fund research to find treatments and a cure for tomorrow - that'll keep me motivated when things

get tough. I've been focused on this project for over a year now, so I hope it pays off."

To follow Matt's preparations and progress on his climb or to sponsor him visit his blog at kilimattjaro.com