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Fitness fanatic takes on mountain trip for charity

SNAPSHOT

Once he was addicted to pizza — now Mark Tann is addicted to fitness challenges. He is planning take on a cycle ride across mountains in France to raise money for a local hospice.

When he weighed 18 stone, had a 43in waste and devoured a pizza every night just cycling to the nearest shop seemed a daunting task.

But a decade later reformed fitness fanatic Mark Tann is now preparing for one of the most gruelling bike rides imaginable — across miles of mountainous terrain

The 35-year-old, from Little Melton, is currently training hard in preparation for a ride across 128-miles of France's Pyrenees mountains in just one day to raise money for the Quidenham Children Hospice.

The trip, set to take place on June 25, will be the second time in as many years that the member of Norwich cycle club Velo has set himself a gruelling challenge.

A year ago he successfully completed 106 miles across the French Alps raising about £3,000 for charity — despite breaking an elbow just weeks before the trek.

This time round he will have to scale six large mountains, the biggest of them 2,100 metres above sea level, rather than two, and again he is battling an unforeseen injury.

He said: "When I completed the ride last year I started to suffer bad back spasms shortly afterwards and they have now come back.

"However, as far as I am concerned it is mind over matter and I won't let it stop me."

Mr Tann, who is currently unemployed but wants to be a journalist for specialist cycling publications, took up cycling 10 years ago to help him quit smoking and he soon began to love it.

He is now five stone lighter than he was, does not smoke and enjoys a healthy diet.

In order to achieve his goal he has an almost daily fitness routine of pilates, yoga, weights and cycling.

On his chosen charity, which he hopes to raise £5,000 for, he said: "I don't have children at the moment but I want to try and put a smile on these children's faces by doing my bit to help them."

→ To sponsor Mr Tann and read a blog on his training log on to www.ridingforthe needy.com.

→ Are you doing something amazing for charity? Contact David Powles on 01603 772447 or via email at david.powles@archant.co.uk.

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Mountain challenge: Mark Tann is in training for a gruelling charity ride across the Pyrenees mountains in France.

PHOTO: STEVE ADAMS