

Birmingham couple to walk 2,650 miles to help people with tinnitus

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A Birmingham couple is raising funds for tinnitus charity, Tinnitus UK, by walking the Pacific Crest Trail – a 2,650 hike from Mexico to Canada.

Phill, 55, and Lara Brewer, 45, from King's Heath, are setting off this week on the once-in-a-lifetime challenge and raising funds so the charity can support other people who, like Phill, live with tinnitus every day.

Lara said: "Phill has suffered from tinnitus for over 15 years.

"He woke up with it one day, and aside from one brief (and bittersweet) break it never went away. It makes him feel at the centre of an unstable bubble of sound, which is like an out of tune television on its loudest setting that never switches off.

"The sound moves around him and often changes in frequency and pitch. It disturbs his sleep and is massively intrusive."

One in seven adults are affected by tinnitus - which is a debilitating condition that causes the perception of noise when there is no external source.

Tinnitus affects 7.6 million people in the UK – with around 633,000 adults living with the condition in the West Midlands. There is currently no cure.

Lara added: "We hope by sharing our journey we can inspire others to follow their dreams, no matter what these might be. We also dream of a cure for tinnitus and if we can help, even a small part, by raising some awareness and fundraising then sharing our story about taking on this challenge is worth it."

The often-gruelling hike, which will take almost six months to complete, will take Phill and Lara through California, Oregon and Washington where they'll trek over miles of blisteringly hot desert, over snowy mountain passes and through deep forest.

The couple, who will be wild camping for most of their challenge, are looking forward to the short relief Phill will get from his tinnitus while raising vital funds for the charity.

Lara said: "Camping out under canvas provides some respite at night with the sound of the rain and the wind on the tent helping to detract from the noises in his Phill's head. And hiking in beautiful landscapes provides a focus which also helps distract him from the noise."

Daisy Mankee, Regular Giving and Legacies Manager at Tinnitus UK, said: "We're absolutely thrilled that Lara and Phill have chosen to fundraise for the charity while taking on this incredible challenge.

"We're so excited to follow along with their adventures and I know we, and the wider tinnitus community, will be wishing them the very best of luck over the next six months or so. We can't thank them enough."

To help boost Lara and Phill's fundraising, go to: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/lara-brewer-1674666523625>.

END

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Notes to Editors

- Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing a sound when there is no external source for that sound. Someone with tinnitus may hear ringing, buzzing, hissing, whistling or other noises.
- Tinnitus can be there all the time or come and go.
- The volume of someone's tinnitus can vary from one episode to the next.
- Tinnitus comes in many types, but Tinnitus UK is here for everyone living with tinnitus:
- We provide free support to anyone with tinnitus or caring for someone with tinnitus.
- We are leading the charge for more investment in tinnitus research.
- We are connecting the research community to people living with tinnitus to ensure those searching for new treatments and a cure understand the impact of tinnitus on everyday lives.
- We work with healthcare professionals to ensure you receive the right information to manage your tinnitus.
- For every seven adults in the UK, one will have tinnitus. Think about that the next time you're in the supermarket, on the bus, or walking down the street. Tinnitus affects 7.6 million people in the UK – with 1.5 million of them having severe tinnitus.
- To everyone living with tinnitus our message is clear – your struggle is our cause.
- Visit: www.tinnitus.org.uk.

Tinnitus UK. Registered charity number 1011145.

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