“My handstand challenge for best mate whose life was turned upside down.”

Friday 6 February, 2026

When illness turned Ellis Healy’s life upside down, his best mate Harry turned upside down too - by committing to doing a handstand every day in 2026 to raise money for charity.

Harry Clesham, who lives in southwest London, has already raised more than £2000 for The Brain Tumour Charity via social media and his fundraising page – and his technique has improved to the stage where he can walk a few steps on his hands too.

He posts daily videos of his activities on Instagram, and carries out his feats in locations as varied as pubs, pavements, gyms, holiday hotspots and hotel rooms.

Harry and Ellis first met when they were students at university in Leicester in 2011. They lived in the same halls of residence, hung out together during Freshers’ Week and both joined the rugby team.

Ellis, 33, who had intended to become a butcher like his dad, then worked in London for a year - as did Harry. They sat their finals in Leicester and then both moved back to London to work at tech companies. Harry was also a groomsman and the Master of Ceremonies when Ellis married his wife Hannah in 2024.

But Ellis has had health struggles since he was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease when he was 11. Treatment included immunosuppressant medication which stopped working when he was 27.

While waiting to have scheduled keyhole surgery, he was rushed to hospital with a blockage in his intestine. This was found to be tumour, and to his shock, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Fortunately, it had been caught early and he was treated with six rounds of R-CHOP chemotherapy – a combination of four drugs and a steroid.

That's where his good fortune ended. A PET scan to check he had the all-clear found no uptake of the contrast dye on the right side of his brain. A follow up scan identified a brain tumour.

Ellis said: “I was due to have keyhole surgery to treat my Crohn’s but ended up having four lots of surgery and two bouts of sepsis which triggered a cardiac arrest.

“I was discharged with a wearable defibrillator vest and was one of the first patients in the UK to use one. I had to wear it for 24 hours a day, including at work and at the gym which was awkward.”

Once his infection had gone, brain tumour treatment was due to start. But first he needed to have a permanent defibrillator implanted. Then, last March, Ellis had three seizures back-to-back.

Ellis continued: “I had my first seizure while I was asleep. It woke my wife who called an ambulance which arrived within 10 minutes. They gave me a sedative which stopped the seizure, but I had another one a short while later and another one in the ambulance.”

Six months after the seizures and the ICD Implant, Ellis had an awake craniotomy to remove a grade 2 to 3 astrocytoma, from which he’s now recuperating.

Throughout everything, Harry has supported Ellis as best he can – taking the mickey out of his fashion sense when he was wearing the defibrillator vest, and when he was well enough, going camping on the Dorset coast. That’s when the idea to raise awareness and funds came about.

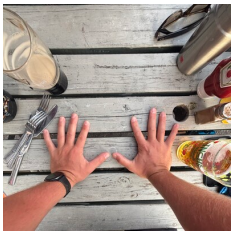
Harry said: “Ellis has been an exceptional friend and we’ve been close pals ever since we met. His strength, humour and resilience throughout have been nothing short of inspiring - I truly haven’t met anyone like him. He’s one of a kind.

“The challenge was born after Ellis and I spent two days walking together along the Jurassic Coast. We talked about what he was going through, how he was feeling and what I could do to support him in a meaningful way. During those conversations, Ellis said that if I were to raise money for a cause, he would want it to be for The Brain Tumour Charity.”

Ellis added: “I mentioned The Brain Tumour Charity because their website and leaflets provide all the

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information you need to know - not just about living with the illness but also how to prepare for what's next and how to overcome some of the challenges you're going to face.

"It's just a really good single point of reference so I've used it a lot and it's been very helpful for my family to understand it as well, in their own time."

You can support Harry's fundraising efforts here: https://www.justgiving.com/page/officialhandstandharry – and watch his daily handstand videos on Instagram @officialhandstandharry.

Harry said: "The rule is simple: no matter what the day brings, there is always time to show up for this cause. This challenge is about more than handstands. It is about standing alongside a friend as he recovers from brain tumour surgery, raising awareness of the impact brain tumours have on individuals and their families, and supporting the research, care and services provided by The Brain Tumour Charity. I will keep going, one day, one handstand and one donation at a time, for Ellis and for everyone affected by brain tumours."

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