

Breast Cancer Care's Ben Nevis Challenge

More details



Who can take part in the Ben Nevis Challenge?

The Ben Nevis Challenge is open to women and men of all abilities. The minimum age to take part is 16 years, and those under the age of 18 must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult. We request that there is at least one adult present for every two participants under 18.

How fit should I be?

The event suits people of average fitness and stamina, but we recommend you train and prepare for it as soon as you sign up, in order for you to enjoy this challenge.

When you register we will send you a training guide to help you kick start your programme. The fitter you are, the more confident you will be and the more you will enjoy the day.

How will I raise the sponsorship money?

Although we ask you to commit to raising the minimum sponsorship to take part in this challenge, fundraising needn't be daunting or hard work!

Once you start telling people what you're doing and why, you will be amazed at people's generosity and support. When you sign up we will send you an invaluable fundraising pack bursting with ideas to get you started. This is a great way to meet new people and get in touch with old friends.

All it takes is a little inspiration and organisation and the money will begin to roll in. Think about your hobbies and interests - they could be the key to your success!

A great tip is to break down your sponsorship target into smaller, bite-sized chunks and be proud of what you are doing.

How much of my sponsorship money will go to Breast Cancer Care?

Your £50 non-refundable registration fee will go towards your event costs and covers Breast Cancer Care's administration charges for this challenge.

The remaining event costs will be paid from part of your sponsorship money (some people opt to pay for the event costs themselves).

Once the event costs of £180 have been covered, all remaining sponsor money goes to Breast Cancer Care.

When do I have to pay my sponsorship money?

The £500 minimum sponsorship must be received by Breast Cancer Care by Monday 29 October 2012. This does not include Gift Aid. You will be contacted after this date if minimum sponsorship is not received.

How many people will I be walking with?

We take groups of around 100 people. On the day of the challenge we split walkers into smaller groups of approximately 20 people.

Each group is allocated a guide/s and a Breast Cancer Care staff member. There are no fast or slow groups and everyone comes off the mountain as a group.

What support is available for this event?

Breast Cancer Care staff will meet you on the coaches at Glasgow Central train station or Glasgow International Airport and transfer you to our hotel near to Fort William for the duration of the event.

On the day of the Ben Nevis ascent, in addition to Breast Cancer Care staff, there are experienced mountaineers and qualified first aiders to guide you up the mountain.

Rest assured all necessary safety procedures are in place. All the guides carry radios and communicate regularly throughout the day.

Participants will be divided into walking groups with one guide leading and one guide at the rear. In the interests of safety, no one should pass the lead or fall behind the last guide and any instructions given by the guides must be followed at all times.

Although the event is designed to challenge you, we are not putting anyone's safety at risk and support will be available at all times. The Breast Cancer Care team is on hand every step of the way, to help and advise you.

Breast Cancer Care staff will also accompany you on your return journey to Glasgow after your challenge.

How long will it take to walk up and down Ben Nevis?

We expect it to take around four to five hours to reach the summit of Ben Nevis and then three to four hours to go down, meaning you will be on the mountain for most of the day.

What will the pace of walking be like?

The pace set will be accommodating for all. This challenge will not be enjoyable if you rush it. The level of fitness will naturally vary throughout the group, therefore whatever pace you adopt you can be sure of company.

The group will be encouraged to work together, with stronger walkers helping those who may be slower. The guides will ensure the group stays together and everyone has a great day!

Please note that the pace set by the guides provides the event organiser enough time to get everyone to the summit safely and back down again before it gets dark.

Are there many stops on the mountain?

We will have regular rest stops throughout the day at appropriate places. As it is quite a long day, you are encouraged to walk at your own comfortable pace.

The most important piece of advice on the day is that you keep taking on fluids at regular intervals. We also recommend that you eat plenty of energy snacks, e.g. nuts, biscuits and fruit in order to maintain those vital energy levels throughout the day as well as adjusting your clothing appropriately. Have extra warm layers for the summit, even if the weather at the bottom is good.

Is it steep?

Our route is mostly a gradual ascent, but there are some short steeper sections - after all we are climbing Britain's highest mountain!

Take your time, and if you feel out of breath or in need of a rest, take one. We want to ensure everyone gets to appreciate the magnificent scenery unfolding around them and take as many photos as they like.

What is the terrain like?

The first half of our route is what you would expect from a moderate mountain walk. Though we do follow a clear path, at some points the terrain is uneven and can get slippery after heavy rain.

In the second part of the ascent, the path turns into a series of rocky steps and - as you gain height - the path becomes less defined and uneven. This is when extra care is needed, especially on the descent. After passing a waterfall, the last part of our ascent follows a zig-zag route up the rounded dome of the upper mountain; this section becomes increasingly uneven and rocky underfoot with some loose stones and boulders.

The summit approach is like a lunar landscape. On a clear day the views open out to the north, west and south are simply stunning. After the zigzags the summit is just a little way now, over loose rubble as we make our final push to reach the top.

Then we reach the summit and it is time to take a group photo of us all. We can see the ruins of the observatory built in 1883. The top of Ben Nevis is very flat, and big enough for two football pitches. It is not the traditional mountain peak you imagine, and the actual highest point is the cairn - you will have to take your turn to stand on the top of the highest point in the UK and get your photo taken.

After a break, it will be time to start making our way down.

How will I get there?

The weekend is all arranged for you. All you have to do is make your own way to Glasgow. Once there, Breast Cancer Care staff will collect you by coach from Glasgow Central train station or Glasgow International Airport. We will take you to Fort William and to your accommodation for the weekend. When the challenge is over we will drop you back in Glasgow. Alternatively, you can meet us in Fort William.

What is the accommodation like?

We stay in three or four star hotels in Fort William for two nights. You will be sharing a room with an ensuite-bathroom. Rooms are twin and double occupancy with a small number of single rooms, which carry single supplement charges, should one be requested. Rooms are based on single sex occupancy; couples where possible will be kept together.

Single rooms carry a supplement charge should they be requested. We will ask you as our challenge date approaches whether there is someone in particular you would like to share a room with.

Most people come to these events on their own. Taking part in events such as these are a great way to meet new people and have proven in the past to build long standing friendships. For those of you arriving on your own, Breast Cancer Care will endeavor to pair you up with another walker of the same sex and similar age.

What weather can I expect?

As with any outdoor event, we are unable to predict the weather so each participant must be prepared for all eventualities. You will need to carry full wet weather gear and warm layers with you on the day of the challenge.

The weather conditions at the bottom of the mountain may be vastly different to what we can expect at the top. In the past we have encountered everything from sunshine, snow and rain. A detailed weather forecast will be provided for us during the welcome briefing the day before our ascent.

Should there be adverse weather conditions, we reserve the right to cancel or change the route for safety reasons.

What kit will I require?

When you sign up we will send you our recommended kit list for this challenge. The main items you will need to bring with you are a comfortable pair of walking boots or trainers with ankle support, walking socks, a full set of good waterproofs and plenty of thin warm layers.

On the day of the challenge, you will need to carry your own personal kit for the day in a small rucksack which will include: your lunch, water, waterproofs, warm layers, hat and gloves, mini first aid kit, camera and phone (to call all your sponsors from the top – signal permitting). All your other luggage will remain in your hotel room.

Costs

- There is a non-refundable registration fee of £50.
- The minimum sponsorship target is £500.
- Minimum sponsorship is to be received by Breast Cancer Care by Monday 29 October 2011.
- The event costs are £180 per person, which is taken from your minimum £500 sponsorship.

What is included in the cost of the event?

- Two nights accommodation at a comfortable hotel in one of Scotland's most beautiful settings.
- All meals.
- Return coach transfers from Glasgow International Airport or Glasgow Central Train station to our hotel.
- Guiding team and medical provision for the Ben Nevis Challenge.
- Celebration party and a certificate of achievement.
- A fantastic weekend away!

You will also receive:

- A Breast Cancer Care t-shirt.
- A handbook with training guides, full event details, kit requirements and sponsorship and fundraising information.

What is not included?

- Your travel to and from Glasgow International Airport or Glasgow Central train station.
- Drinks.
- Your spending money.
- Personal travel insurance.
- Personal items from the kit list.

Do I need insurance?

Breast Cancer Care strongly advise all participants to take out their own insurance to cover them for the duration of this event as Breast Cancer Care will not be held responsible for any accident, loss, damage or expenses etc.

Due to the nature of this outdoor activity, participants should accept a certain element of risk. Our guides will do everything in their power to minimise the risks, where possible. In the interests of safety all participants must abide by any decisions made by the guides.

When do I have to sign up by?

Participants enter on a first come first served basis and entries will close on Monday 20 August or once the event participant limit is reached for health and safety reasons.

Thank you for reading, we hope to see you on the summit!