

# Runner is going to the Wall



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## ... on 84-mile charity trek in 22 hours

A SUPER-FIT dad is gearing up for the run of a lifetime along the full length of Hadrian's Wall during the night in a bid to raise thousands of pounds for charity.

Dedicated Matt Atkinson, 41, who is originally from Hartlepool, is hoping to run the 84-mile route - come rain or shine - in 22 hours.

He won't be sleeping and will only be able to snack while running the length of the wall. The challenge starts this Saturday, July 7, at 9pm in Bowness-on-Solway, in Cumbria, and finishes about 7pm on Sunday, at Wallsend.

Matt, who will be running alongside a friend, said he is "excited" by the challenge, which is raising money for youngster Callum Brown, who suffers from cerebral palsy.

Callum, seven, lives in Seaton Sluice, Northumberland, and his family need to raise £70,000 to cover the costs of sending him to America for a lifesaving operation to allow him to walk independently.

Matt will be completing the Hadrian's Wall challenge alongside Phil Smith, 35, a self-employed physiotherapist, from Ashington.

The pair will be running with a head torch to ensure they keep on the right track.

Matt, who spent 10 years with the Royal Artillery, said: "We have been running between 10 to 15 miles a day and then a marathon at weekends. It is a massive challenge but we feel ready for it and we are quite excited by it."

"It will be challenging on so many different levels due to the distance, the weather, trying to take on enough food and drink. "It is dangerous because it is not advisable to run for that long. But I am in safe hands and we are well prepared."

"The most we will stop for will be a couple of minutes but it is for a great cause and we are determined to do it."

Matt decided to help raise money for Callum's family because he works with his grandmother. It is the second charity challenge Matt has taken part in within the past few weeks.

In June he completed a two-day 46-mile trek from Newcastle to Middlesbrough alongside former

colleagues from the armed forces for the 4th Regiment Family Association, which provides help and support for soldier's families, and the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA).

The group started from the Tyne Bridge, Newcastle, and then walked to Sunderland before arriving at the Transporter Bridge, in Middlesbrough, after an overnight stay in Wingat.

Matt said: "We are still counting the money but we are confident we have raised thousands of pounds."

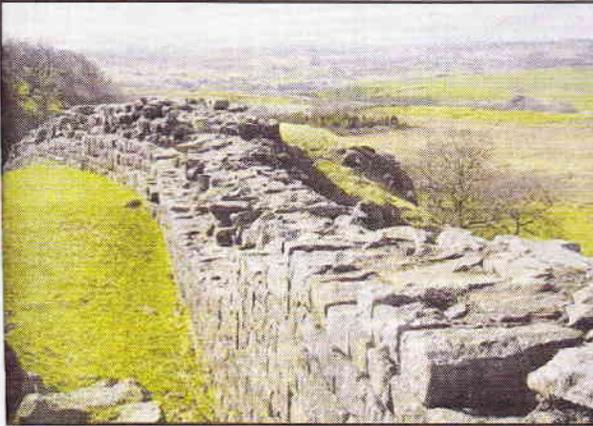
"It was good fun and we enjoyed spending time together raising money for two good causes."

Matt left town aged 17 to join the Royal Artillery, where he served for 10 years including time as an instructor, before retiring in 1997.

The 41-year-old, who is now a director with Cleardata, is married to Christine, 40, who works in corporate hospitality. The pair, who live in Newcastle, have an eight-year-old daughter, Millie.

To sponsor Matt visit [www.justgiving.com/wallbangers](http://www.justgiving.com/wallbangers)

**CHALLENGE:** Matt Atkinson (right) and co-runner Phil Smith in training for the charity run along Hadrian's Wall (below) for cerebral palsy sufferer Callum Brown. Bottom, Matt (centre, with white cap) taking part in the 46-mile Newcastle to Middlesbrough trip. Picture by Richard Sharpe



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