



# THE SECRET TO ENDURANCE

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Cathy Brown, ex-professional boxer and sports performance coach, has gone from high intensity training to endurance training as she prepares to climb Mount Kilimanjaro for the Alzheimer's Society. Here she discusses the secret to endurance and the preparation for her trek.

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**You're clearly fit and active, but your background has been in the ring rather than on mountains. What inspired you to take on Kilimanjaro?**

I have had a terrible few years with failed IVF's and looking after my mum who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's for 3 years now, so I needed something to look forward to and train for to keep my mind happy. It is so important that you set an aim or goal for training as it gives you something to strive for and it keeps you motivated for the hard days. I chose Kilimanjaro as it takes me totally outside my comfort zone as boxing is short, intense training but training to trek and climb for 6/7 days needs an entirely different type of training as it is endurance based I knew it would be a great test for me whilst also keeping my training fresh. I also wanted to do something big as larger challenges keep me more excited.

**What training have you done so far, and what challenges has this presented?**

I have done a lot of walking everyday just to get me used to the constant movement, so I walk 3 days per week to work (7km) and use the stair master twice a week for 45 minutes, which I will build up slowly to 2/3 hours. Also, I am lucky to work at Third Space, London which has a hypoxic chamber so I do a 'rack it up' Sunday, where I push the hypoxic air up as much as possible and just walk at an incline, I'm starting on 1 hour then upping it slowly to 2/3 hours.

One other important element of training I am doing is strength work so my muscles are as strong as possible, this is a great way to preserve energy when I am climbing as my muscles won't have to work as hard to keep me climbing as I will have developed a strong base. So, a lot of single leg, single arm work mixed with



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squats, dead-lifts etc.

I am also keeping an element of running sprint work in my training so I can push my lactate threshold to the maximum for use in times of struggle when I need to dig into my oxygen resources or get up a steep part of the climb and recover quickly so I can carry on. The challenge it has presented is that I am not an endurance athlete, so it is difficult for me as strength, power and intensity is a different type of training, so mentally I need to get used to being slow, constant and long.

#### **How important is nutrition to your preparation, and do you take any supplements to support you?**

Nutrition does play a large role in my training and try to get my essential nutrients from my diet. However, you are putting your body under a lot of pressure and just a great diet alone won't help your body recover as fast, so you need supplements to get the most out of your training and trek.

I take a Q10 supplement because it is one nutrient that you can't get enough of through your diet and it is critical for energy metabolism. I find it makes a huge difference for endurance which is going to be crucial when I hit my pain threshold on Kilimanjaro. Q10 is also important to help avoid oxidative stress which the body suffers from when you do

intense exercise.

I spent a lot of time researching which Q10 supplement to use. I chose a Danish company called Pharma Nord. Their products are manufactured to pharmaceutical standard and I know I can rely on them. The product I use, Bio-Quinone Active Q10, has over 90 clinical trials behind it and the most product specific research of any Q10 supplement. There has been a lot of confusion with poor quality Q10 supplements being sold so it was important for me to choose a supplement with science to support it.

When training I also supplement with magnesium and zinc to help with my muscle recovery as well as topping up with omega-3 (essential fatty acids) from fish oil. Once again I use Pharma Nord products because of the guaranteed quality and because I know I can trust the brand.

#### **You're climbing the three peaks challenge before the big trip, how else are you preparing yourself?**

I'm looking forward to the three peaks but I am going to do them separately and doing the hardest climb on each which should be about 6/7 hours. You are trekking, climbing for 7-13 hours per day for 6/7 days when you climb Kilimanjaro, so getting used to this will be imperative. I was hoping to get

onto the 24 peaks challenge in the Lake District as well as climbing all three peaks separately. Basically, I am just upping the time I train for.

#### **Why did you decide to raise the funds for Alzheimer's Society?**

I have struggled watching my mum suffer with this horrible disease and really want to do something big to help raise money for research. I also lost my aunty last year to Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's is a terrible disease and I have experienced deep sadness watching my mum suffer over a three year period with every day tasks such as washing, brushing her teeth, making tea or food, remembering where the toilet is in a house she has lived for 55 years, knowing who her family are and that is just the tip of the iceberg. Unfortunately, the disease just gets worse and there is no cure at the moment. This is extremely heart breaking and I want to raise as much awareness and money for research as possible for this amazing charity as the government don't fully support help for people with Alzheimer's or fund research. Alzheimer's Society – Dementia support and research charity is an amazing charity.

#### **What essential items will you take with you on the big climb?**

My Burt's Bees lip balm, my Bio-Quinone Q10 supplements, good energy bars and my sunglasses.

#### **Are there any particular aspects of the climb that you're worried about?**

Yes, no matter how well you are prepared, if hypoxic sickness hits you, it hits you and there is nothing you can do. You are either predisposed or you're not, so I hope I'm okay. Everything else is a challenge for me mentally and physically which is great as I thrive on it.

**Please help Cathy raise 20k for much needed money for a great charity:  
<https://www.justgiving.com/Cathy-Greg-Kilimanjaro>**