

The Irish embrace sport to raise over €2m during Covid lockdown

A number of people used the Covid-19 lockdown period to raise funds for charity by completing a physical activity. Here are some of the more notable ones.

Social distancing, self-isolation, and quarantines may be keeping us physically apart, but that hasn't stopped the Irish coming together (figuratively) in support of some very good causes over the last few months. In fact, research by OLBG found that [sports-related fundraising campaigns](#) in particular raised over €2 million between March and May 2020.

Analysing over 500 campaigns in this period, the research found that 62 per cent (pc) of all campaigns run during this time were for Covid-19 related causes. These campaigns aimed to raise €1.3 million but final funds exceeded this target by 52pc, hitting over €2 million.

Due to restrictions, sports teams were not allowed to train and in general, people were forced to stay within a 2km radius of their home for most of this period.

To keep fundraisers active and respect the restrictions, walking and running were the most popular forms of activity, making up 76pc of exercise-focused fundraising campaigns. These were followed by campaigns including running and cycling with 9pc and cycling only, with 6.5pc. In fact, such as industries like online retail, [bike shops reported record sales](#) during the pandemic and couldn't keep up with the demand.

While charities were forced to [cancel their events](#) over the last three months, a lot of individuals across Ireland took action to help their sports clubs and many known charities. Here are just a few of the impressive - and inventive - ways Irish people are building up a sweat while helping to support their communities in the face of the Covid-19 crisis.

An Olympic effort for cystic fibrosis

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CAhY7NEALtW/?igshid=1cen6xghzez23>

Modern pentathlon athlete Arthur Lanigan-O'Keefe had planned to represent Ireland at the Olympic Games for the third year this summer. But with the Olympic Games postponed, he decided to make his own Olympic effort in aid of Cystic Fibrosis Ireland. The Kilkenny man burned an incredible 10,000 calories in just 24 hours. Most of the hard work was done on his exercise bike, but Arthur also ran up and down the stairs, crawled, and used home gym workouts to get his heart rate up.

Mayo's stationary ironman

Stephen Donnelly set up his own Ironman course - complete with a huge water-filled builder's skip - at his home in Ballina, County Mayo to raise money for the local Meals on Wheels and Mayo General Hospital Covid-19 fund. After a 3.6-km stationary swim in the skip, the triathlete completed a 180-km cycle on a stationary bike before running 42.2 km on his treadmill.

A one-woman dance party to celebrate turning 90

Proving she's still got the moves, Kathleen Lynch raised over €16,000 for Age Action and the Irish Red Cross by holding a 90-minute dance party on her 90th birthday. The great-grandmother invited the whole nation to be her virtual dance partner as she celebrated in her back garden in County Louth, and the party reached its peak with a waltz at 3:09p.m. to mark the exact time she was born.

Push-ups for PPE

<https://youtu.be/t9eOnM2vJKU>

Irish Independent sports journalist Michael Verney completed no fewer than 1,000 push-ups in 60 minutes in order to raise funds to buy PPE for HSE staff and the Do it for Dan Trust. The challenge was live-streamed on YouTube, with Michael raising over €10,000 for both causes and averaging around 17 push-ups per minute.

A hurling marathon for HSE

Tooreen hurler Cathal Freeman took his hurling stick in hand for a strenuous 42km backyard marathon that raised over €55,000 for PPE for frontline HSE staff fighting COVID-19, as well as for the Irish Cancer Society. The Mayo hurler set up a makeshift 30 meter circuit on a patch of grass near his home. It took him less than eight hours to complete nearly 1,400 laps of the circuit, and he completed the entire feat while soloing a sliotar.

10 marathons in 10 days

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBqauJDFJxM/?igshid=1m9sfzbmcr9o6>

Limerick man Páraic O'Neill set himself the formidable challenge of completing 10 marathons in 10 consecutive days to raise funds for the Irish Cancer Society. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the 21-year-old had been running loops of his regulated 2km radius and getting miles into the legs. The 10 marathons in 10 consecutive days will start on the 13th of July in the Woodlands Hotel in Adare, makes its way to the Ring of Kerry, before finishing back at the location he started. So far, he's raised over €12,000 for his cause.

A marathon walk around Dublin's football grounds

<https://twitter.com/conanbyrne7/status/1240337486653636608?s=19>

Primary school teacher Conan Byrne raised almost €15,000 for the Irish Cancer Society after completing a marathon walk around Dublin's football ground in March. Conan's route took in every League of Ireland stadium in the Dublin - beginning at Tolka Park and ending at the Aviva Stadium - with him changing into the jersey of each club along the way.

By Gustavo Pelogia

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