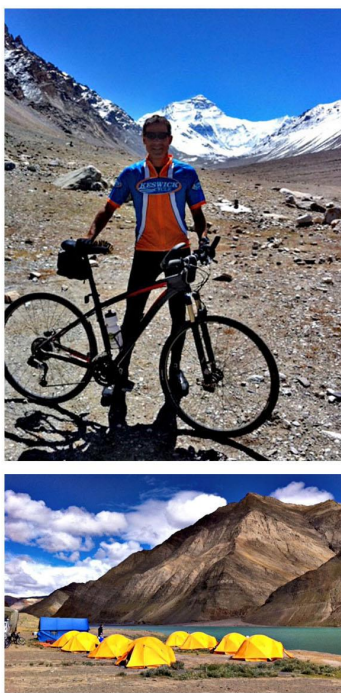




Scott Herrin, Boulder, CO
Cycling to Everest Base Camp

COMMENTS FROM PJAMMERS WHO HAVE EVERESTED

NIGEL BROCKTON, PH.D.
Fairfax, VA

One issue with doing an Everesting nearer the Fall is the hours of daylight. My first was in July (2015) in Calgary...and the vast majority of it was done in daylight. My second (accidental) "Everesting 10k", as it is called now, included two full nights of darkness in September (2019) in Virginia (46.5 hrs total...no sleep)...and was horrendous, especially as I was on totally unfamiliar roads. Even doing the same climb over and over, the concentration required in low light conditions is another drain on your physical and mental resources. For me, the sweet-spot is ~8% so that the ride is not too long...but also having an easy descent is a massive advantage...and not having to hang on the anchors at the bottom because of a tight stop and turn around. ..but maybe that's because I had to do it 160 times?!

I can understand wanting to Everest on a "significant" climb (there's even a Hells500 badge for that) but if the goal is just to "get it done", I think the optimum would be a segment with 600-800ft vertical ascent with a pretty steady gradient of ~8%, that would mean ~2miles up/down...and require ~40 reps ... (very approximately 😊)...maybe ~20minutes per lap. Longer laps and higher elevation changes mean big differences in temperature (especially in shoulder seasons). Longer descents mean greater chances of loss of concentration with fatigue...even concentrating for 2-3 minutes can become remarkably difficult later in the process. Mentally, I also think shorter segments are easier..."if I could do the last one...I can do another"...repeat.

I also think it helps to do it somewhere that makes having support nice and easy. Close to a community who might get involved, easy access for friends family, fellow cyclist who might want to do a lap or two or ten with you...or just wave a flag beside the road. That's another advantage of a shorter segment...it's not so long until your supporters see you...and you get a boost from your supporters. And your fellow Everesters...you'll see many more times on a shorter segment. Oh...and make sure that there are "facilities" nearby 😊

Everyone is different though, so I am only giving my perspective. Fortunately I had considered most of these things in advance of my first Everesting so it was relatively straightforward...just climb, descend...and do it again. Everesting the **easy way?**

John Johnson, PJAMM Founder Note: – [Nigel Brockton](#) has been very important in my recent cancer treatment journey. Nigel first contacted me to contribute a climb in Virginia where he lives. I was intrigued by his email address (drbulletski@gmail.com – I mistakenly pinged him on this thread at his professional address – more about that later) – so, I said to myself, this guy is either a polish marksman or some kind of fast ass skier – turns out it was the latter. With one

simple Google search I quickly learned that Nigel owned the Great Britain Record for speed skiing in 1999 at 222 kph, reached his top speed of 241 kph (150 mph) in 2005 and was (and may be) Britain's only World Cup winner in an Alpine discipline. Our paths would never have crossed if that were his end game, but Nigel is also a 2 time cancer survivor, uber cyclist, has a Ph.D. in Genetic Epidemiology of Colorectal Cancer Risk (that has got to be a niche area 🤔) and is Vice President of Research at the American Institute for Cancer Research and that's where he's really helped me out. I've gotten some amazing input and direction from Nigel and the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#) (for example, [The Healthy10 Challenge](#)) and I am forever indebted to them for it.



Nigel

RON HAWKS
Henderson, NV

My short sighted question to Ron - "Have you ever considered an Everest?"

I've done it before. It was Fall 2015, right before the time change, where I rode up Lee Canyon 5 1/2 times. Started before sunrise and finished before midnight. I did rest for about 10 minutes after every climb to eat and stretch. It was brutal, both mentally and physically, and something I wouldn't do again. I'm always up for a challenge but that level of suffering was something that pushed me beyond anything I've ever done as I think people underestimate the mental drain of doing the same climb over and over again.

Ron addendum: In preparation of climbing 29,000 feet and being on the bike for almost 16 hours, I decided to do a double century to prepare my backside for being in the saddle that long. I also recommend climbing at two gears below what you would normally do up your climb of choice just to keep from overtaxing your legs.

Just a few things I thought I'd pass on for your adventure.

John Johnson note: Ron is the very first PJAMM contributor and has travelled the world cycling and contributing his photographs and climb summaries for our members and visitors since 2015. PJAMM is forever indebted to Ron for his many contributions to the breadth and quality of the product we present to the cycling world.



Ron at the summit of Angliru, Spain 7-27-17

CHARLIE THACKERAY
Essex, UK



Charlie Everest The Great Dun Fell 2021

My best advice (not that you need it!) on the Everesting is try not to let the breaks / stops mount up - I'm sure you will have a great support crew but try to eat and fuel on the road - easier said than done. If I do it again I'll avoid steep nasty climbs like GDF [pjam note: [Great Dun Fell](#)] I feel confident that a Trenching is doable with the right climb and support. Will the heat at Death Valley be a factor? I saw in the media it is now officially the hottest place on the planet! Maybe around the end of September it will be just right. That said, I love the heat so I'm with you on choice - GDF was 2°C at the top in June!

Today I was out with my wife who has an ebike on a lovely country ride (including pub stop) - 29°C just perfect for me but other Brits would probably moan it's too hot. Mind you going uphill the ebike pushes hard and I have to get out the saddle to keep up!

John Johnson note: Charlie pinged me in 2018 for advice about getting from the ocean to the top of Mauna Kea. Since then we have become close friends and I have learned much from him about England - bangers and mash, beer is good . . . stuff like that 😊 . . . and, a lot more really important cycling and training tips and instruction.

Charlie's addendum: I used a big tool box to pack for every eventuality which was in the car - but only had one issue - tyre blow out - same happened last time too - haven't had any punctures in all my training and then bang - bad luck - but I was ok.

Other things are get a really decent energy bank so you can keep Garmin / Phone topped up with charge. I also put a strip of gaffer tape on the side of a small bar / stem bag and after each summit added to the tally.

For lights I had a head torch for the up and then switched on a really bright (3000 lumen) handlebar mounted light for the descents - I conserved the battery as it was not needed on the way up.

Without sounding too arrogant I didn't find it as tough as others had described- I really suffered with the wind chill on the way down and wasted too much time at base camp, but my legs held up ok. I put that down to fuelling and forcing down real food - I didn't use a single gel (although I did have some in case of emergency).

You are very experienced in these sorts of things so I don't think you will find it too big a leap - and your mental strength is off the scale. Some music might be a good idea as it's a good distraction as it does get boring.



Charlie atop the #1 hardest bike climb in the world July 6, 2019

[Mauna Kea, Hawaii](#)

MOLLIE BERNSTEIN
SEATTLE, WA

John intro: I asked Mollie for some advice on Everesting and whether Encinal Canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains might be a decent road for that effort. Here's what she said:

Daniel and I rode Encinal a few weeks ago. Nice climb, not steep. When are you attempting the Everest? Have you done one before?

Advice:

- 1) Start early. It gets hot in the canyons.
- 2) Have people come to support for the morale boost

- 3) Daniel says bring bathroom wipes and park near the bathroom. Reconsider the climb if there is no bathroom unless you don't mind a bathroom emergency on the side of the road haha
- 4) Eat real food. Burger, bagel, pizza, etc.
- 5) Slow and steady is key!
- 6) Keep the stops short. Stopping time adds up quickly and it's hard to get going after stopping for a while.
- 7) Bring a spare battery.
- 8) Bring WAY more food (and drinks) that you expect to eat. It's nice to have a variety and you don't know what you will want to eat at hour 10. Only need 1 water bottle. Don't carry a bunch of stuff because it will be in the car. Bring bike tools/spare tire in car in case of a mechanical.
- 9) Bring 2 sets of lights in case they die. Tape one light to your helmet because it points the light in the direction you are going. Have the second light on your handlebars as a backup.



Mollie and Daniel did Mauna Kea unsupported on March 23, 2021.

DAVE BRILLHART
ORLANDO, FL (not exactly Everesting Country 🙄)

I've attempted four EVERESTS. Two failures and two successes.

- First tried Haleakala on Maui. Made SO many rookie mistakes. Rental bike, tried to squeeze it in during a family vacation, a hurricane was off the coast. 2015.
- Then tried Mt Hamilton in San Jose. In December. Hypothermia. Sweat on the way up. Snow at the top. Descending wet in freezing conditions. Had to bail.
- Then I found the perfect mountain in North Georgia near Ellijay. A 7 mile climb at a nice gradient of 6-7% with little traffic and clean roads where I could descend barely touching the brakes. LOVED it. Success, finally.
- Then I did my craziest one. On a single-speed. Up the Glass Elevator in Borrego Springs, CA, in the summer. 9 ascents, 8 descents. The daytime temps were brutal! The last climb I fought 30mph headwinds! But I made it. The single-speed was not a big deal. The climb has a nice steady grade. So I geared for that. And could coast down.



Dave in his PJAMM Florida/USA kit.