

# GORDON DEFIES THE ODDS, AND HIS DOCTORS, WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**Gordon's story is one of strength, determination and the power of physical activity in defying doctor's expectations.**

Gordon's wife has vascular dementia, and he was her sole carer for a long time. Whilst protecting his family from how unwell his wife was, Gordon himself was becoming unwell, eventually being diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2017. Following a series of 20 strong radiotherapy sessions, his cancer was gone, but his white blood cell count was completely destroyed by radiation, meaning he was at serious risk of infection and illness.

To try to reduce the chance of getting more unwell, Gordon decided he would get as fit as he possibly could through a combination of healthy eating and exercise. Numerous doctors told him that nothing could be done, and that he would have to live with the increased risk of infection and illness. But Gordon did not accept this.

He began gently exercising, predominantly walking, however after nine months, nothing had changed. However Gordon didn't give up, gently increasing his walking, and after 12 months, his white blood cell count had risen slightly to 0.1. After another increase to his walking regime, to a 6 mile walk each day, they reached 0.3, but doctors still had little hope. It was at this point, Gordon decided to enter the 2018 Manchester Half Marathon, at the age of 83, something he'd always wanted to do, but had never had the time to do it.

With his walking increasing, and now some running, Gordon's white blood cell count continued to rise. In October 2018, he completed the half marathon, finishing second in his age group and vowing to return in 2019. Not long later, he returned for more tests, this time showing that his white blood cell count was now over 1.0! The doctors were stumped, asking Gordon;

*"Can you please tell us what you are doing, because never in our or the hospitals experience, has any patient ever managed to get a white blood cell count back after it's been wiped completely out by radiation."*

Gordon's answer was simple;

**"BRANDY, BEETROOT JUICE AND LOTS AND LOTS OF EXERCISE"**

Gordon continued to join activity clubs, such as the Over 50s ramble organised by Link4Life, to help combat his loneliness after his wife went into care and to help maintain his activity levels.

Just a few months ago, his white blood count was just under 2, which is almost the normal level for a man of his age.

## MANCHESTER HALF MARATHON 2019

True to his word, Gordon was back on the starting line for the Manchester Half Marathon in October 2019. This time as the eldest participant in the event, but that didn't stop him, shaving 9 minutes off last years' time.

**The power of physical activity, in combination with a healthy diet, for Gordon has not only changed his life, but has proved the transformative power of physical activity for our health and wellbeing.**



The saying may be "older and wiser", but for Gordon, it's "older and faster"