Let's make a difference together

Charities need our support now more than ever. That’s why we’re here to help you smash your fundraising target. We’ve put together some of the best tips from runners who were in your position in previous years to get you up and running.

Here’s your free fundraising guide with handy tips and stories.
Say hello to our fundraising heroes

They’re sharing their best fundraising stories and how they overcame their marathon challenges. Here are some of their inside tips to get you started.

They smashed their targets

Kerrie Aldridge
Describing herself as once being “a very unfit ‘plus-size’ mummy”, Kerrie set herself the challenge of running the Virgin Money London Marathon. Not only did she do it, she also raised £11,300 for the Miscarriage Association in the process.

Chris Allington
As one of the three biggest Virgin Money London Marathon-running fundraisers on the Virgin Money Giving platform a few years ago, Chris raised a phenomenal total of £36,415.

John Friend
John ran the Virgin Money London Marathon for the 35,000 people in the UK living with incurable breast cancer, one of whom is his mum. He set himself a target of £1 for every one of them, raising over £35,000 for Action Against Cancer.

Chris Brown
Veteran runner Chris attempted to set a Guinness World Record for the fastest marathon dressed as a hockey goalkeeper. His attempt helped him raise over £4,550 for Christians in Sport.

Andrew Jay
Andrew is MD of the Anderson Group, which recently opened the NAS Anderson School in Chigwell to support people with autism and Asperger’s syndrome. He once raised a massive £24,565 for the National Autistic Society.

Read even more runner stories on our Fundraising Hub: https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/fundraising/
Jim King
Jim was a marathon veteran, but he only started asking for donations in 2019. He ran for his nine-year-old son, Ethan, who had been diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer. That year, he raised a phenomenal £17,280 for The Bone Cancer Research Trust.

Emma Pitt
As one quarter of the team ‘Super Lou’s Ladies’, Emma helped to raise an incredible £9,228 for Brain Research UK by running the Virgin Money London Marathon in memory of her good friend Louise Moore.

Amy Randall
Amy won her place in the Virgin Money London Marathon via the ballot, but she decided to make the most of the opportunity to raise money for charity. She raised £4,070 for the MND Association and Parkinson’s UK.

Liv Price
A team runner, Liv raised £8,194 for Hospice UK a few years ago with her father and cousin. Liv’s granddad passed away in a hospice run by the charity and she says the love and care shown by the staff was truly incredible.

Chris Thompson
Chris Thompson ran the Virgin Money London Marathon for Heads Together, raising £1,799 for a cause close to his heart. He also got to high-five Prince Harry, which was a bonus!
It’s ok to be scared – Kerrie Aldridge

“Raising money is daunting, especially if you’re also trying to train for your first marathon, but people are keen to help. You need to develop a thick skin, get out there and start asking people for that help.”

Tell your story... – Jim King

“I ran for a very personal reason – my son being diagnosed with bone cancer. We are a private family and talking about it was not something I was particularly comfortable with at the time, but I hoped to raise an amount to make a real difference to the fight against bone cancer, so I told my story.”

and your charity’s story – John Friend

“I told a very honest account of my mother and the realities of a metastatic cancer patient sufferer. Most importantly though, I was raising money for a specific cause that gave people hope: a potentially revolutionary research project that seeks to find a cure for metastatic cancer in just two and half years.”

Social media is important – John Friend

“All of my fundraising was done via social media and these posts would often take me hours or even days to write – just don’t tell my boss that!”

...but not essential – Chris Allington

“I’m not a social media user at all. Hence my fundraising used email and I found it a more personal way to communicate my progress. People the race at least 15 kilos lighter than when I started training or if I didn’t finish in under four hours and 30 minutes. I hoped this would spur people on to donate and it seemed to work.”

How they smashed their targets

It helps to get off to a good start – Jim King

“My amazing running club, the St Albans Striders, made an incredible gesture, offering to donate the money raised at our annual 10-mile Fred Hughes Race to my cause. I was blown away. It forced me to up my game and get out there with my story. They eventually raised £1,000 and the race winner, Rob Spencer, donated his £200 prize money, so I was off and running, so to speak.”

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How they smashed their targets

**Be honest** – Amy Randall

“My lowest day of training was at the start of the year. It was really cold and I slipped on the ice and really hurt myself. I posted a video of myself crying and saying how hard I was finding it. That day I raised £100, which inspired me to get back out there and continue training the next day.”

**Letters work** – Amy Randall

“If you are planning a raffle I found it much more effective to write letters than emails. Emails are too easy to delete; if the company you are asking is local then you can hand-deliver the letter, which was even more effective for me.”

**Don’t forget Gift Aid** – Chris Thompson

“Encourage all your supporters to tick the Gift Aid box if they can. The Virgin Money Giving platform made it really for easy for my supporters to add Gift Aid to their donations – boosting the money my charity received by over £330!”

**Have some skin in the game** – Chris Allington

“I pledged to personally donate my target amount if I didn’t start the race at least 15 kilos lighter than when I started training or if I didn’t finish in under four hours and 30 minutes. I hoped this would spur people on to donate and it seemed to work.”

**Use your contacts book** – Andrew Jay

“I run a business so I asked for support from my supply chain. I worked out our biggest suppliers in terms of the money we spend with them and asked them to donate specific amounts. Be bold. If you don’t ask and then chase for support you won’t get it.”

**Consider fundraising as a team** – Emma Pitt

“Running and fundraising as a team was so important to us. Going through it all with other people makes so much difference and also helps you keep to the schedule as it’s harder to miss a training session or fundraising target if someone is relying on you to turn up or make it.”
How they smashed their targets

Pick your moment – Kerrie Aldridge

“How Sunday night was always the busiest time on my Virgin Money Giving page, so I’d try and post on my social media around then too. It seemed to catch people when they were in a good place to give.”

Make it personal – Kerrie Aldridge:

“I found a great printer who printed my running vest for free. So I sold memory miles – I’d run a mile in memory of somebody special and those names and miles would be printed on the back of my vest. The last mile was for my own children who I lost to miscarriage.”

Raise as you run – Chris Thompson

“Loads of family and friends want to follow you on the day of the race so make sure you get them to download the official Virgin Money London Marathon app to track your progress – there’s even a donation button in there too to help you get more sponsorship as you run!”

Say thank you – Jim King

“One of the best things about fundraising on Virgin Money Giving was the ease of signing up and accessing the information. I made it my mission to thank every person who donated either by text or email and I was easily able to find the information needed to do that.”

The finish line is not the end – Jim King

“More and more money came in after I finished the race as people who meant to donate but had forgotten remembered. So share the photos of you crossing that finish line far and wide.”

Stand Out – Chris Brown

“If you’ve run a marathon before, your friends and family may not want to sponsor you again. I found that challenging myself to set a Guinness World Record helped get people on board, although I didn’t make the time in the end. All the adjudicators are at the Virgin Money London Marathon so just get in touch, pick a record to try for and go for it. If you’re wearing a costume then you should train in it, no matter how silly you look. You don’t want to be wearing it for the first time on race day.”
Fundraising inspiration

Things are a little bit different this year, but there are lots of great ways to kick off your fundraising efforts and get that money coming in for your charity – including some Covid-secure and digital ones too.

A raffle - Emma Pitt

“We managed to collect some incredible prizes from local companies. One of the best things we did was contact our local football team, Millwall, who donated two match tickets and featured us in their programme.”

A virtual run - Kerrie Aldridge

“I ran for the Miscarriage Association, and to coincide with Baby Loss Awareness Week, I invited people to join me in a virtual run – they donated £5 to my page and ran 5k in stages at their own speed. When they completed the 5k I would send them a certificate. Lots of them also asked their friends to donate to my page if they succeeded.”

An exercise class - Kerrie Aldridge

“I approached my rumbasize instructor and he was more than happy to help. He gave a class and asked people to donate to my Virgin Money Giving page rather than paying him.”
Fundraising inspiration

A quiz night - Liv Price

“Pubs really are fantastic places. We found a place that let us have their event space for free so we could host our own pub quiz.”

A treasure hunt - Liv Price

“This is a fun way to fundraise and get people involved. People make donations to your charity to take part. You hide items in a park or a big open space, along with plenty of clues, and the treasure hunters get to work on tracking them down one group at a time.”

Outdoor wine-tasting - Liv Price

“Host an alfresco wine-tasting event with some bottles of vino and an expert to talk about them. Local wine shops might be willing to donate some nice wines and you can ask people for donations to take part.”

If some of these ideas don’t fit into Government guidelines, we’ve got plenty of Covid-secure fundraising ideas here:
https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/fundraising/how-to-host-a-socially-distanced-fundraising-event/
https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/fundraising/fundraise-from-home/
Exclusive perks when you fundraise with us

We’re the official fundraising partner of the Virgin Money London Marathon. That means we give you exclusive benefits you won’t get anywhere else.

1. Donation prizes
   Every online donation you receive each month between now and the end of September, not only boosts your fundraising, you also automatically get the chance to win a £500 donation for your charity.

2. Heaps of help on our Fundraising Hub
   Get inspired with advice, tips, tools and stories to help you smash your fundraising target.

3. Easier donations on Marathon day on the marathon app – exclusive!
   If you have a fundraising page with us, your friends, family and supporters can track your progress around the course on race day. They can also donate directly from the Virgin Money London Marathon app.

4. Join our exclusive Facebook Group
   Running the marathon and fundraising is a lot easier when you have support. That’s why we’ve created a Virgin Money Giving Marathon Facebook group. Ask questions and get advice directly from past and present runners. Search Virgin Money Giving Running Family to get involved!

5. Badges
   Exclusive badges to share on social media when you hit big milestones.

6. Making a difference, not a profit
   Whether it’s running a marathon or sitting in a bath of baked beans, we know fundraisers give their all to raise money for good causes. That’s why, unlike other sites, we’re a non-profit organisation.
Join us and create your fundraising page