

Cancer Climb & Trek for Prostate Awareness

Climber: KEN MALIK, SANTA ROSA, CA



Ken Malik is the co-founder and executive director of the Prostate Awareness Foundation; He is one of the team leaders of this year's expedition to Mt. Shasta.

The question always comes up: Why climb a mountain? The stock response is usually: because it is there. For me it goes much deeper than that. It is a chance to honor the good friends I have lost to cancer over the years. In 2016 alone I lost seven friends to cancer. So I will be honoring their memory in a special ceremony at the summit. I also plan to bring the ashes of two people very dear to me.

I attempted to reach the summit of Mt Shasta on the 2012 *Cancer Climb and Trek for Prostate Awareness* and I came within 600' of the summit before I turned back due to a bad ankle sprain. On that climb, four of our twelve-member team were able to summit. This is a tough and challenging mountain. This time it would be nice to reach the summit, but I have understood for a long time that it is not so much the destination but the journey that is important.

I do feel fortunate that my body at 71 years old is still in good enough shape to mountain climb. I attribute this to my over 21 years of holding my prostate cancer at bay using a strict diet, regular daily exercise and stress management. I feel very lucky to have caught my disease early and be able to stall its progression without the need for conventional intervention. Men and their families need to know that cancer does not have to be the end of a rich and rewarding life.

I think it's incredibly important that organizations like the PAF continue to offer men free, patient driven information about how to take a pro-active approach to prostate health. It's the main reason I'm climbing once again. Won't you please support my efforts with a generous tax deductible donation to the PAF?

You can support the PAF by making a tax-deductible donations via PayPal using your PayPal PayPal account or a credit card on the PAF website:

<http://www.prostateawarenessfoundation.org/cancer-climb-2017-Mt-Shasta/>

Thanks for your support.

Cancer Climb & Trek for Prostate Awareness

#EyeOnMtShasta

July 9 - 14, 2017

Mt Shasta, Cascade Range, 14179 ft., 4321.8m

Cancer diagnosis leads Santa Rosa man to new heights

CHRIS SMITH THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | January 8, 2017 More info: prostateawarenessfoundation.org

The piece of bad but not terribly uncommon news struck Ken Malik like a hurled stone nearly 22 years ago. He had prostate cancer. The teacher turned medical-device salesman, then 50, could have prepared to be irradiated or have his prostate cut from his body. Instead, he chose to do something extreme.

He changed his life. Malik adopted a vegan diet and began consuming an array of painstakingly researched vitamins and supplements. He meditates and works out, seeks reasons to laugh. He has forged himself into a strong, lean mountain climber. Sensing that his new path was counteracting the disease while bringing previously uncharted exuberance to his life, Malik spread the word of his discoveries in the realm of nontraditional cancer strategies. He created an educational and support foundation and invited other men with prostate cancer to tackle mountain ascents with him.

"We've done 16 of them so far," said the resident of Santa Rosa's Rincon Valley, now 71. "We're going to do Mount Shasta this July." He sponsors serious climbs and recreational hikes to raise operating funds for the Prostate Awareness Foundation he leads, and to inspire men and their families that there is hope for "a full and fulfilling life" following a cancer diagnosis. Malik doesn't claim the holistic, largely lifestyle-based approach has cured him. "I still have prostate cancer," he said. But he asserts that the dramatic improvements to his diet, level of physical endeavor and outlook have substantially slowed the disease's progression.

Malik's experience places him somewhere between fellow Prostate Awareness Foundation colleagues Stefan Parnay of Windsor, who in 2013 celebrated tests showing his cancer was gone, and Sebastopol's Jan Zlotnik, who lived with the disease for 22 years before succumbing to it in 2015.

Malik's message is that he's not only alive more than two decades after he opted not to rush to a conventional response — radiation and/or surgery — to a prostate cancer diagnosis, he has spared himself the consequences of those treatments and now savors the vitality and other healthful effects of his chosen approach. Simply put, he said, the good that's come from rechanneling his life in answer to prostate cancer "is probably the most positive thing to happen to me."

In addition to the mountain climbs and hikes he leads for men with prostate cancer, and for their partners, Malik hosts monthly support group sessions in Santa Rosa and San Francisco. He invites anyone who's interested to a meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday in the Building B community room at the Acacia Lane Apartments, 657 Acacia Lane.

He considers himself a beneficiary of extensive research on whether the typical American diet high in animal fat and processed foods causes prostate cancer, and whether a dramatic upgrade in a patient's diet can slow, diminish or even cure the disease.

In recommending a low-fat, plant-based diet for men diagnosed with prostate cancer or concerned about it, guidelines of the UCSF Medical Center note, "It's estimated that a third of cancer deaths in the United States can be attributed to diet in adults, including diet's effect on obesity." As Malik maintains a vegan diet, consumes daily and seasonal supplements, meditates through qi gong, works with weights, runs and makes plans for Prostate Awareness Foundation hikes and climbs, he also relies on traditional Western medicine to monitor his disease.

He visits a doctor at UCSF for the tests that Malik said at present show no discernible progression in the cancer of his prostate, though his PSA level has risen to 36. It was 8.4 at the time of his diagnosis in 1995. The blood test for PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, is routinely used to detect the possible presence of prostate cancer. National Cancer Institute literature says that in the past, most doctors considered a PSA level of 4 or lower to be normal.

Today, the institute says, there is no level deemed to be normal, though "the higher a man's PSA level, the more likely it is that he has prostate cancer." Malik would prefer that his PSA level be falling rather than slowly rising. But he's chosen his approach to fighting cancer, aware there's no perfect solution and that any strategy comes with risks and uncertainties.

It won't surprise him if he lives to see a breakthrough vanquishing the all-too-common disease that rocked his life and set him on a new path. "There are a lot of exciting things happening in medicine," he said.

He can only imagine what his life would be like had he undergone radiation and/or a prostatectomy at age 50 and hadn't seriously amped up his diet and physical activity. He certainly expects that it wouldn't include planning now for a weekly group hike Sunday at Golden Gate Park and an ascent of Shasta this summer.

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Link to the full article: <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/6515463-181/cancer-diagnosis-leads-santa-rosa>