

I am honored to share my story in the PFT newsletter. I first met Peter Bryce on a trip to Loughborough University in early 2017. Peter met me to discuss how the Trust could support my dream to run 5400km across the United States of America. In February 2015 I lost my mum to PF and wanted to honour her memory and her battle with the illness. Having been an ultramarathon runner for many years I decided to embark on a run from Los Angeles to New York. After 18 months of training and lots of fundraising, I started the run on 14 May 2017 at the end of Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles. Little did I know that I would be fighting for my life a few months later. On the 2nd August 2017 after 3947km, I was hit by a pickup truck at 50-60mph on US highway 40 near Columbus, Ohio. Sadly, I was left with life threatening injuries and thrown into a ditch that was not visible from the road. The driver did not stop. I spent the next four months in hospital learning to walk again. The journey of rehabilitation was long, slow, and painful. For the first two months in hospital I was not able to do anything on my own – go the toilet, wash my body, sit up and move! I felt an immense sense of shame and guilt by putting my family in a situation they did not choose. I cried a lot in hospital. Sometimes the tears were slow and weepy; sometimes they were uncontrollable and desperate. I would cry about the last few hours of my mum's life (I was by her side when she died) and the emotional stress I had put my family under. For some reason everything in my world seemed unbearably precious. I had all the time in the world to reflect.

Sixteen surgeries later, and after three years of physiotherapy and gym work, I am now back running. The body is different and not as quick as it once was, but I am stronger mentally. So many people have helped me to reach this point - my family, personal trainers, and many physiotherapists. In September 2021, I ran my longest race in 5 years, a 156km run in 19 hours and 15 minutes. In May/June 2022 I will be returning to the United States to finish what I started in May 2017. My dream to run across the US is still very much alive. And so is my quest to raise further awareness of Pulmonary Fibrosis. My training continues and I have an awesome support crew in place (Jim and Paul who have themselves run across America). More to come in the next newsletter!

You can follow my progress on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pg/nickrunsamerica/> and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/nick.runsamerica/>

Details of how to donate can be found at <https://pulmonaryfibrosistrust.org/donate/>