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Stretching his limits helps, climber with Parkinson's discovers

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Tim Bowden made it - with a bit of energy to spare and a lot of inspiration to share.

Bowden, 67, who has Parkinson's disease, hiked a super-challenging, 15-mile route from the deserts of Catalina State Park to the pine-topped heights of the Catalina Mountains last weekend.

His motivation: to show that intense exercise can mitigate the severe stability and balance problems caused by the degenerative disease.

"It was pretty tough, but it went very well," said Bowden, who was featured in an Arizona Daily Star story on March 31, six days before the hike.

"The hiking time for us was 8.5 hours," he said. "There were nine of us who went all the way to the top," including Bowden's wife, Diane.

Bowden, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2007, credits training at the Parkinson Wellness Recovery Gym in Tucson for helping him succeed.

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"This hike shows me that exercise - and for me intense exercise - can allow me to continue to do some of the more strenuous activities I pursued before I had Parkinson's," he said.

Contributions in support of his trek - totaling about \$11,000 as of this week - go to the gym to benefit other Parkinson's patients. Contributions are still being accepted at the gym's www.pwr4life.org website.

Contact reporter Doug Kreutz at dkreutz@azstarnet.com or at 573-4192. On Twitter: [@DouglasKreutz](https://twitter.com/DouglasKreutz)

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