

# Vail Daily

## Vail cyclist: Diabetics can help each other

After cycling across U.S., Kerry White forming group so sufferers can share ideas about coping with disease

[Steve Lynn](#)  
[Vail, CO Colorado](#)  
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EDWARDS, Colorado — Kerry White got numerous supportive e-mails and help from 13 crew members during her most recent cycling race across the United States. Now she wants to help, too.

White, who has diabetes, wants to start a support group for diabetics so she can share what she knows about the disease and how to deal with. The group will meet once or twice each month to exercise and to exchange ideas about how to live with diabetes in the Vail Valley, she said.

This summer, White cycled 3,050 miles in 13 days in the Race Across America, which she has done twice before with teammates. But this time, she rode alone from Oceanside, Calif. to Atlantic City, N.J., to raise money for a diabetes cure.

“It made me realize that it’s not about me anymore, and that I can really make a difference in people’s lives,” White said. “But I can only do that if I branch out and help people.”

While she was cycling, White pricked herself to test her blood sugar 10 to 13 times each day and once every hour when she was feeling worse. She also injected insulin into her body to help regulate her blood sugar a few times a day.

### Exercise helps with diabetes

Stephen Jentzen, who found out he had diabetes when he moved to Vail, works as a ski instructor in Vail Village. He has hiked Mt. Kilimanjaro and has cross-country skied the Commando Trail, an 18-mile loop on Vail Mountain.

#### Need help with diabetes?

Kerry White will hold the first meeting of her diabetes exercise and support group at 7 p.m. Monday at Starbucks in Edwards.

Local diabetics or parents of children who have diabetes should attend.

and Nordic skis almost every day.

Jentzen has been able to accomplish all that by closely monitoring his blood sugar and diet, he said.

“I don’t think there’s anything that diabetes should hold you back from doing as long as you can keep yourself in check,” Jentzen said.

White said she exercises 15 to 25 hours each week. She rides a stationary bike in her garage for an hour every morning, runs during her lunch hours

The group will hike, snowshoe and do other activities, she said. Her goal is to get everyone to exercise more. For instance, she hopes to get a diabetic who does no exercise to work out four or five days each week for 30 minutes to an hour, she said.

### Exercise relieves depression

Exercising can be challenging at first for diabetics because they fear their blood sugar might go too low, she said.

Kerry White, who has diabetes, wants to start a group that will meet once or twice each month to exercise and exchange ideas about living with the disease.

**Preston Utley/Vail Daily**



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“Once you start, you can become extremely self-aware and then it helps you in every other area of your daily control because you learn to read your body better,” she said.

Exercise also can help relieve symptoms of depression, which diabetics like White often have, she said.

White also wants people in the group to talk about their lives. White feels stress from the knowledge that if she doesn't keep her blood sugar low enough, she could become blind or get heart disease, kidney failure, gangrene or nerve damage.

“These things are in the back of your mind every day,” she said.

Diabetics in the valley lack services that those in larger cities have, so White also wants people in the group to give each other tips about how to live with diabetes.

### **‘They can do anything’**

Jentzen says he sometimes feels lonely as a diabetic in the valley. He thinks that a support group here could help him and other diabetics.

“I'm not even certain there's a support group here other than what Kerry is forming,” Jentzen said.

Eagle resident Barbara Hogoboom's son, Doug, was a crew member during White's ride across 14 states. Her son, Matt, has diabetes.

“He was just in awe of her accomplishments,” she said.

Some diabetics, especially children, think that their disease makes them unable to do the same activities as other children, Hogoboom said.

White is “trying to make everyone aware that they can do anything... they just have to take care of themselves,” Hogoboom said.

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