

Million mile man

Last year, ultra-endurance cyclist Danny Chew completed his one millionth kilometre in the saddle. Now he's aiming for one million miles

The idea of cycling one million miles came in 1983, after I'd already cycled around 130,000 miles. I wanted a long-term goal to keep me riding.

I learned to ride at four, but my first event was when I was ten. It was a 200-mile race that had to be completed in 24 hours. It wasn't until six years later that I started tracking my mileage. There were no home computers in 1978, so I had to use paper maps.

Reaching 300,000 miles, in 1992, was my first major milestone, but passing 500,000 was the real breakthrough – getting halfway is a huge step. My next landmark will be 700,000 miles, which I hope to pass in 2011.

I always preferred longer races – the longer the race, the better I did. My first ultra was in 1988, which was a 572-mile qualifier for the Race

Across America. I won it in 32 hours but it wasn't until 1994 that I could afford to take part in the main race because I didn't have the £7,500 it costs. I've done it eight times and won twice, in 1996 and 1999.

Manageable million

During races and when training, I break down bigger goals into smaller tasks. Races are more mentally tough than physically tough. It's hard being on a bike for



Chew is a two-time winner of the Race Across America ≈ 3,000 miles from coast to coast

'It will take me another 30 years to reach one million miles. My biggest fear is being hit by a car'

vertical mile. Once I climbed it 101 times, which is about 13,410m, in 18 hours.

Only 30 years to go

I'm 45 years old and passed one million kilometres by averaging 20,000 miles a year. It will take me another 30 years to reach one million miles, but my biggest fear isn't my body breaking down through age, but being hit by a car. Some of my friends have been killed by traffic and I've had some close calls.

When I get to the end it will be a huge relief, and I expect there will be a little sadness. I'm worried about what will happen when it's over, but if I'm healthy I think I'd like to do another 100,000 miles. My first few years are based on averages, so these extra miles would ensure I'd done the distance.

I couldn't stop now, not with all those miles behind me. It has been such an investment that it would be ridiculous to quit. I get many emails from people who say my goal has inspired them, which is fantastic. It's important to set yourself goals because they provide the motivation to never give up. ■

Chew will be in his mid-70s by the time he reaches his target



so many hours but you can train for sleep deprivation. Leading up to an event I'll sleep as much as I can so that during the race, when I'll only sleep three hours a night, I'm mentally prepared to be tired.

When I'm training in the summer, riding about 1,000 miles per week, I have to eat 5,000 calories every day. During races such as the Race Across America, I need 10,000 calories. I take on a lot of liquid nutrition when racing and eat high-calorie food, such as oatmeal pie and fig bars, when training.

During winter I may only be able to do 200 miles each week because of the snow and ice. Instead I climb steps at a University of Pittsburgh building with 36 floors. I'll do this 12 times, which is a

CHEWING THE FACTS

- Year Chew is expected to reach one million miles **2038**
- Approx number of Tours de France needed to reach one million miles **536**
- Miles cycled in 1994, Chew's busiest year **27,095**
- Times Chew has cycled the distance around the world **25**
- Time of Chew's first Race Across America win **8 days, 7 hours, 14 minutes**