



# Video Game Marathons

First of all, thank you! It's great that you're thinking about supporting SpecialEffect's work helping disabled people to level the video gaming playing field. Your video game marathon means a lot to us as a charity – we really appreciate that you're doing something you love in order that more people can join in the fun.

We'd like your event to go as safely and smoothly as possible, and so here's a non-exclusive list of pointers that we've picked up from gamers who've previously done marathons for us, plus other that have appeared on various websites. If you can contribute anything else, ping an email to [mark@specialeffect.org.uk](mailto:mark@specialeffect.org.uk) or [alison@specialeffect.org.uk](mailto:alison@specialeffect.org.uk)

## How long?

- It's up to you. Two hours, eight hours, 24 hours – you can game for however long you think will be a challenge. If you're doing a marathon by yourself, we'd suggest 24 hours max, as the intrepid people who've completed solo 48-hour marathons for us have gone way past the point of enjoyment in the process. 24 hours is a good figure for group marathons as well, and it won't detrimentally affect your fundraising. Some well-organised teams have pushed themselves up to and over 48 hours, but again, it's not the norm.
- Consider a morning start time. Anytime around 10am is a good idea, so at least the finish line is in sight after playing through the night. A decent sleep beforehand is a good idea - getting underway on a Saturday morning after being out on the town the night before hasn't proved to be wildly successful.
- Most players have reported that they hit a wall at some stage – though not usually when they expect. It's at this point when support from your teammates, friends and subscribers is most useful.

## Solo or group?

- The feedback we've been getting is that it's much more fun doing it as a group. That way you can rotate social media, chat and gaming duties, and take more regular breaks. It also makes for a more entertaining stream.
- If you're going alone, you might want to consider forming a fundraising team or at least encourage your friends to pop round or go online for a game at some point during your marathon. You'll be glad of the support.

## Single or multigame?

- Your choice. If you're playing different games, working through the evolutionary levels of a game series is popular. You could revisit those elusive PlayStation trophies or XBL achievements, dust off that game that you bought but never got round to playing. Or maybe you've got old retro systems packed away that deserve to be shown some love. If you think your audience can bear it, throw in something like Wii Sports in the early hours of the morning to move the muscles. What about a sponsored speed run?

## Broadcasting

- You know this stuff. Twitch is still the most popular at the moment. But if you're new to live streaming, Twitch have a helpful page at <http://help.twitch.tv/customer/portal/topics/301257-getting-started/articles>
- Test your kit, games, and stream well before the day you start your marathon. And have a backup computer and peripherals ready as an emergency in case of the unthinkable. Sounds obvious, but having a motherboard melt at 2am is not a source of joy.
- Get a mod (or yourself) to ping links to our short case study videos on our YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/GameOnForEVERYONE>) at regular intervals, so that supporters can see how their donations are helping. You could also run them during comfort breaks. We can give you a list of good links beforehand.
- You might also want to take a look at this video from Gaming for Others (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keDrjOKuX3U>), who pass on a few pointers about how they kept themselves and their marathon fresh - including dancing on camera!
- You can maximise fundraising during your marathon by setting in-game or off-game challenges/forfeits, eg: 'For every single donation of £20 we'll dress up/dance/sing the song of your choice.' One gamer was sponsored to complete a couple of levels of Mario while riding an exercise bike, for example. Or you could eat fish fingers and custard if someone donates over £25.

Here's a mixture of forfeits that #GamelyGiving and ACOG promised as their fundraising total increased:

- At £25: Phil will give a live rendition of a Rocksmith song (requests taken)
- At £50: we'll publish our best screams from our horror gameplay videos
- At £75: we'll all take on the cream cracker challenge (and fail miserably)
- At £100: we'll reveal a secret video of Craig talking to his cat!
- At £125: Lisa will allow us to bleach her long dark locks to a bright shade of blonde
- At £150: want to see us spend the rest of the marathon in animal onesies?
- At £200: we'll reveal what happened when we caused trouble in Trafalgar Square
- At £250: the entire team will wear lipstick for the remainder of the marathon
- At £300: Phil will have to try out his cheesy chat-ups in a nearby bar
- At £350: we'll all wear our pants on our heads for the rest of the night
- At £400: want to see a video of us singing at a karaoke bar?
- At £450: in a break from gaming, we'll put on a fitness video and do the routine

- At £500: Craig and Phil will have to face their greatest fears – crabs and squid
- At £550: we'll be shaving the head of our Events Manager, Tom

## Fundraising

- Set a fundraising target well before you start. Some donors are happy to give well in advance.
- Give as much detail as possible on your fundraising page - what you're planning to do, when you're going to do it, why you're doing it and your fundraising target. You might want to include a link to our introductory video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKLNrCivOzw>) and add a brief description of what we do, something like:

*"I've created this page because I want to make a difference. I'm going to take on the challenge of a 24-hour video game marathon on [26-27] February 2016 to raise money for an amazing charity called SpecialEffect. They put fun, inclusion and confidence back into the lives of people with disabilities by helping them to play video games.*

*Please donate now and help me reach my target of £250 so that people with disabilities can enjoy the games we take for granted. The more people that know about SpecialEffect, the greater their impact, so please also spread the word by sharing my page with your friends and family.*

*Thank you in advance for your generosity, it means a lot! You can find out more about SpecialEffect at <http://www.specialeffect.org.uk>"*

- Use a photograph of yourself (or your team) on your fundraising page. Donors are more likely to give to someone they don't know if they can see what they look like. Look into the camera for the photo – studies show it's more engaging than staring philosophically into the distance.
- If and when the fundraising target gets beaten, have a plan to encourage donors to extend it, eg, 'Now we need you to raise that total to at least £500 before we'll play Dark Souls through to the finish.'
- If you haven't reached your fundraising goal by the end of your challenge, keep spreading the good news about your event. Many people find that friends and family will continue to donate to your page way after you've finished your challenge.
- We can help your fundraising efforts with various media resources: branding, social media coverage, etc. Don't hesitate to get in touch. [mark@specialeffect.org.uk](mailto:mark@specialeffect.org.uk) or [alison@specialeffect.org.uk](mailto:alison@specialeffect.org.uk) or call 01608 810055

## During your marathon

- Take regular breaks from your gaming; go outside, feed the cat, make a sandwich, take a shower, that sort of thing. It'll also reduce the risk of DVT.

- Remember to eat and drink! Try and eat little and often, as a massive meal will make you feel feeling sluggish. Nearly everyone we've talked to has advised sticking to fresh, healthy foods and not snacking on junk food; the sugar crash will leave you grumpy and tired. Nuts are good.
- If you're going to use caffeine to get you through, it's best to stick to water for the first half of your marathon at least, and save the coffee for the inevitable slump.
- Have a spare set of clothes handy. Fresh clothes can make you feel great again.
- Keep as far back from the screen as possible, and look away from the screen regularly.
- Stop if strange or unusual feelings develop, or you feel ill in any way. There's no shame in resuming your marathon the following day or weekend. If you suffer from epilepsy or seizures consult your doctor before taking part. There's no direct link between video games and epilepsy, but photosensitive sufferers should take precautions when thinking of playing for such long periods.
- Again, this sounds obvious, but don't plan to do anything that might endanger yourself and others (like driving) immediately after the event.

## Thanks again for supporting us with a marathon!

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