

News

By EVA MILLETT

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HIS years of chasing cheap but potentially deadly thrills are safely behind him – but Spencer Wragg isn't ready for the quiet life.

The 29-year-old, from Leicester, is 12 countries into a 10,000-mile bike ride from Dover to Australia.

The super-fit teetotaler is a far cry from the directionless, drug-ravaged party animal who suffered an overdose three years ago.

At 19, he left home for Ibiza, diving into a hedonistic lifestyle that eventually spiralled out of control.

By the age of 25, after a three-day bender led to an overdose in July 2022, he knew it was time to change.

He banished drugs from his life, quit alcohol six months later and set out to transform his life completely.

Spencer had already completed a 4,500km bike-packing trip from Leicester to Athens before deciding to take on the mammoth ride to Australia.

"Two years after my overdose, I decided to do something to prove to myself that this second chance wasn't just going to go to waste," said Spencer.

"I cycled from the UK to Athens and I felt like a kid again when I was on my bike.

"It went really well and I found purpose in myself, so I thought, 'How can I push myself harder?'"

Spencer is a recipient of nutrition company Huel's Limit Seekers fund, which enables adventurers to take on extraordinary endurance feats around the world.

Other Limit Seekers include Jack Jarvis, who is planning to run from Beijing to London, and Mike Humphrey, who is preparing for a 12,000km run from the northernmost to the southernmost tips of the USA.

Huel has sponsored Spencer's trip, helping take financial pressure off day-to-day life on the road.

"Before Huel got in touch I was scrimping and saving, probably living on £20 a day," said, Spencer, whose next stop is Turkey.

"Now I'm a lot more comfortable and can stay at campsites some nights if I want and have showers."

He received a message on Instagram from the company while travelling after entering the Huel Limit Seekers competition.

"When I found out, I was absolutely buzzing," he said.

"Getting the support has definitely made me put a few extra K's in."

Spencer trained for six weeks before setting off for Oz, but believes there is only so much preparation you can do for such a challenge.

"With cycling, you just got to crack

'How I swapped snorting drug mountains for cycling up real mountains'



OVERDOSE PROVED A TURNING POINT FOR ADVENTURER WHO IS HEADED FOR AUSTRALIA USING PEDAL POWER

"I'm really proud of how far I've come in the past three years. It's incredible

Spencer Wragg, pictured

on," he said. "If you want to go do it, just do 10km a day, then do 15km, then it goes up more and more and more as days go by. You learn on the road."

People often overcomplicate matters when embarking on cycling adventures, he feels.

"It doesn't matter what kind of bike you got," he said. "Just get a £20 bike off Marketplace, get yourself a

couple of bags, wrap a tent on there and just get going. You can't plan too much with these things.

"So many people are interested in what you do. If they're not cyclists themselves, they're more than



SENSE OF PURPOSE: Spencer

happy to help you – giving you water or sharing tips with you.

"The world becomes a lot friendlier on a bike, I find."

His approach to the challenge has been shaped by his overdose experience.

"I'm really proud of how far I've come in the past three years," he said.

"From being on drugs and drinking alcohol three, four, five, six times a week, to where I'm currently at now, teetotal; inspiring people to get outdoors and travel, it's incredible.

"When I overdosed, it knocked everything on the head. I wasn't playing with life anymore, it wasn't worth the risk of what I went through."

For Spencer, the sense of achievement from challenges like this has replaced the thrill-seeking behaviour of his past.

"I've traded sniffing drug mountains for cycling up mountains," he said.

"That's all I'd chase when I was younger. I'd chase going out, having fun and this that and the other. Doing cycling, it's not a quick hit, it's delayed gratification and once you get that it's a better feeling than you could ever describe."

Looking further ahead, he has a dream of settling in the Dolomites and creating a place for others to enjoy cycling.

He hopes to continue to inspire other people to overcome limitations that often only exist inside their heads.

"If you're at rock bottom, there's no getting lower than what you're currently feeling," he said.

"There's a lot of people to help that can guide you, but the only person who can actually make a difference is you.

"I was stuck in my four walls and I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life until I found cycling. I jumped on the bike and then carried on jumping on the bike.

"Just don't give up on yourself."

Through his challenge, Spencer is supporting the Two Pints Deep charity – a men's mental and suicide prevention charity made for the average man, by the average man.

Wishing such a charity had been there when he overdosed, he now hopes to raise its profile and reach other young men facing the same struggles.

He plans to continue documenting his progress on social media as he pedals towards Australia.

To donate to Two Pints Deep charity, search "two-pints-deep" at:

gofundme.com