# Two trainers lead gritty 10k with tonne of sandbags to spotlight men’s mental health in Manchester



Two personal trainers, Ben Haldon and Harry Balmer, led an impactful 10k run in Manchester, aiming to raise awareness for men’s mental health while carrying a staggering 1,000 kilograms in sandbags. This event, part of the "Movember in May" initiative, brought together over 30 participants who shared the heavy load as a poignant metaphor for the emotional burdens many men carry silently.

Moving beyond mere physical exertion, the organisers underscored the significance of mental health discussions among men. Haldon, a world record holder, conveyed a powerful message about the struggles faced by those with mental health issues. “It’s like going through a dark tunnel all the time and you can either pull up a chair and sit in it, or you can start to take the uncomfortable step to move towards the light,” he stated. Haldon's poignant words were a call to action, urging those struggling to take those initial, daunting steps towards recovery.

Balmer emphasised the importance of camaraderie and conversation, stating that events like these foster “lifelong friendships,” which can serve as crucial support systems. Among the participants was Tom, aged 25, who expressed the value of connecting with others in a new city. “It’s nice to get out and meet people,” he shared, highlighting the communal spirit that underpinned the day’s activities.

The event resonated with many, including 27-year-old Jordan, who has a keen interest in mental health advocacy. The alarming statistics regarding male suicide rates and mental health issues underscored the critical need for such initiatives. According to data from Bupa, one in eight men experience a common mental health problem like depression or anxiety, and suicide remains the leading cause of death for men under 50. The statistics also reveal a worrying trend: despite a growing willingness to talk, nearly a third of men still feel uncertain about where to seek help.

Dr Naveen Puri, medical director for Bupa, noted that men often “suffer in silence.” He encouraged opening up about feelings, suggesting that doing so could not only help individuals feel less isolated but also reassure them that their struggles are not unique. Fortunately, firms like Movember have been making strides in addressing these issues, having funded over 1,250 men's health projects worldwide, with a mission focused on improving mental health and reducing suicide rates among men.

As the participants completed their run, they not only raised funds for Movember UK but also contributed to a wider awareness campaign, encouraging men to talk about their struggles and seek support. Haldon’s commitment to this cause stems from a personal history, having faced his own health scare in the past. He aims to remind others that mental health support is not confined to a single month but is a year-round necessity.

For those experiencing mental health challenges, avenues for support are available, including speaking to trusted friends or professionals. The rising visibility of organisations like Movember and support groups such as CALM and the Samaritans signifies an important shift in societal attitudes towards men's mental health, paving the way for greater openness and community support.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/news/03062025-movember-in-may-runners-carried-a-tonne-in-sandbags-for-mens-mental-health/), [[4]](https://uk.movember.com/about/mental-health)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/news/03062025-movember-in-may-runners-carried-a-tonne-in-sandbags-for-mens-mental-health/), [[2]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/mens-health-mental-health), [[3]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/business/health-horizons/tackling-the-crisis-in-mens-mental-health)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/news/03062025-movember-in-may-runners-carried-a-tonne-in-sandbags-for-mens-mental-health/), [[5]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/men-and-mental-health)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/mens-health-mental-health), [[5]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/men-and-mental-health), [[3]](https://www.bupa.co.uk/business/health-horizons/tackling-the-crisis-in-mens-mental-health)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://worldmetrics.org/movember-statistics/), [[4]](https://uk.movember.com/about/mental-health)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/news/03062025-movember-in-may-runners-carried-a-tonne-in-sandbags-for-mens-mental-health/), [[6]](https://worldmetrics.org/movember-statistics/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mancunianmatters.co.uk/news/03062025-movember-in-may-runners-carried-a-tonne-in-sandbags-for-mens-mental-health/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/mens-health-mental-health> - An article by Bupa discussing the challenges men face regarding mental health, highlighting that 1 in 8 men have a common mental health problem, such as depression or anxiety. It also notes that suicide is the most common cause of death for men under 50, with men aged 50 to 54 having the highest suicide rate of all age groups. The piece emphasizes the importance of encouraging men to speak about their feelings and seek support.
3. <https://www.bupa.co.uk/business/health-horizons/tackling-the-crisis-in-mens-mental-health> - Bupa's article addressing the crisis in men's mental health, stating that three out of four people who take their own lives are men. It also mentions that men are less likely to seek help, accounting for only 36% of referrals to NHS psychological therapies. The piece discusses the impact of traditional gender roles and stereotypes on men's mental health and the importance of creating safe spaces for men to talk about their issues.
4. <https://uk.movember.com/about/mental-health> - Movember's page detailing their efforts in men's mental health, including funding over 1,250 men's health projects worldwide. The page outlines their mission to improve mental health and reduce the risk of suicide among men by uniting experts, funding innovative approaches, and advocating for all men.
5. <https://www.bupa.co.uk/newsroom/ourviews/men-and-mental-health> - Bupa's article highlighting organisations that support men's mental health, such as CALM, Shout, Samaritans, Mind, and Papyrus. It also mentions local support groups like Andy’s Man Club and Men In Sheds for older men, and suggests LGBTQ+ support organisations like Mind Out and the LGBT Foundation for non-binary, intersex, or transgender individuals.
6. <https://worldmetrics.org/movember-statistics/> - A report by WorldMetrics detailing Movember's global impact, including funding over 1,250 men's health projects worldwide and raising over $837 million for men's health initiatives. The report also highlights that men die on average six years earlier than women and that every minute, a man dies by suicide, which is a key focus area for Movember.
7. <https://www.iesohealth.com/wellbeing-blog/movember-getting-proactive-for-mens-mental-health> - An article by Ieso Health discussing Movember's proactive approach to men's mental health, including funding over 1,250 men's health projects in the UK and worldwide. The piece emphasizes the importance of raising awareness and starting conversations about men's health issues to encourage men to open up about their feelings.