



International Essential  
Tremor Foundation

Your Voice for Essential Tremor

**MARCH**  
is National Essential  
Tremor Awareness  
**MONTH**  
EssentialTremor.org

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Running to Make an Impact*

## **Navy Veteran Running 100-Mile Ultramarathon to Raise Awareness of Essential Tremor**

The location was the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Second Class Petty Officer Peder Nelson had just finished his shift as a block guard at the detention facility. It was his first 90 days on the island and there was a “no alcohol consumption” policy in place for everyone working there. As he filled out a log sheet, a senior officer was watching, and approached Peder. Then the inquiry began.

“When was your last drink?” he asked.

Taken aback, Peder realized the officer had noticed his shaky hands. It was an educational moment for the officer as Peder explained that his shaky hands were not related to alcohol withdrawal, but rather a condition called essential tremor (ET). This type of assumption is all too common for people with ET. Alcoholism, drug abuse and nervousness top the list of assumptions people make when they see someone’s shaky hands, head or limbs – all symptoms of ET. Because of this, people afflicted often try to hide it. They feel self-conscious, sometimes embarrassed, and often they let it inhibit them. Peder has felt all of these emotions and more.

But this fall, the 39-year-old Navy veteran from Sellersburg, IN will push past his ET, while raising awareness to the public. Peder will compete in the 6th annual Cloudsplitter 100 set for October 12-13. Cloudsplitter is a 100-mile ultramarathon taking place in the heart of Central Appalachia in the Cumberland Mountains of Virginia.

Throughout his training and his running, he will be raising money for the International Essential Tremor Foundation (IETF). Peder has set up a FundRazr site where people can make pledges to sponsor him. So far, he has raised about \$2,000.

Peder has dealt with ET most of his life, but was formally diagnosed at age 20. He saw his diagnosis as a weakness and decided to get in shape. So he began running. What many don’t realize is that exercise actually make tremors temporarily worsen, but for Peder it’s worth it.

“Exercise is a really good way to feel confident about something and to feel competent about something,” Peder said.

Cloudsplitter participants are allowed 40 hours to complete the 100-mile race course. The record holder for the course did it in 22 hours. Peder expects to finish somewhere between 22 and 40 hours.

Added to the 100-mile challenge, the course will include elevation changes totaling 52,000 feet, along with rugged terrain, which includes crossing water in some areas. He will have help toward the end of the race. Many family members and friends have volunteered to “pace” him. This means they will run alongside him and cheer him on and provide that mental support needed to keep going as he gets closer to the end. He expects to be running on adrenaline that last part of the race, once the physical exhaustion sets in and lack of sleep takes its toll.

These thoughts might hinder someone else, but Peder is up to the challenge. It will be his time to shine a light on essential tremor.

Visit Peder’s FundRazr page online to learn more or to pledge your support. Go to FundRazr.com and click on “find” and “find campaigns” then key in “Peder Nelson.” Or go to [www.essentialtremor.org/awaresstools](http://www.essentialtremor.org/awaresstools).

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**About The International Essential Tremor Foundation:**

Headquartered in Lenexa, KS, the International Essential Tremor Foundation was founded in 1988 and is the leading organization in the world dedicated to those affected by essential tremor. The mission of the IETF is to provide hope to the essential tremor (ET) community worldwide through awareness, education, support, and research.