

Gearing up for Good: Cincinnati CEO will ride his bike across America to help Parkinson's patients

[Maia Anderson](#), Cincinnati Enquirer Published 10:00 p.m. ET July 29, 2019



One bicycle, 90 days, 6,500 miles and \$650,000. That's Joe Motz's goal – to ride his bicycle across America to raise money for Parkinson's research.

The 65-year-old CEO of The Motz Corporation, a Cincinnati-based company that makes synthetic sports turf, created the project he calls [Gearing up for Good](#) to combine his passion for the outdoors with his desire to make an impact.

"I always wanted to go across the country at age 60 and I didn't," Motz said. "I turned 65 and thought, 'Gosh, I'd love to do bike touring where I kind of just lean everything down to what I can fit into the bike and just take off across Americana.' "

His motivation to turn the trip into something more came when he read the book "Halftime: Moving from

Success to Significance" by Bob Buford.

According to Motz, the book taught him that there is a point in life when you make a transition from "seeking success to seeking significance." Motz decided that significance for him meant using his opportunity to travel across the country to make a difference for others.

Why focus on Parkinson's?

Though he doesn't have any family members with Parkinson's, Motz says he chose to focus on the disease because several of his employees, who he considers family, have loved ones they care for with Parkinson's, [a neurodegenerative disorder](#) that causes tremors, stiff limbs, balance problems and other symptoms, according to the Parkinson's Foundation.

"When you've got someone with Parkinson's in the house it's very different from day to day," Motz said. "It's just a bear to deal with. You never know what you're gonna have to take care of as a caretaker that day."

A Gearing up for Good volunteer team has been meeting with companies and individuals to raise money for Motz's mission. Money will also come from people donating through the [Gearing up for Good website](#), where you can choose to donate one time or set a dollar amount per mile.

The money Motz raises will go to the University of Cincinnati Center for Integrative Health and Wellness and the UC Gardner Neuroscience Institute. The money will create a pilot program designed to "utilize scientifically supported integrative health treatment options to reduce physical symptoms while contributing to optimizing psychological, social and spiritual health and wellness as well as greater independence and sense of community," according to a Gearing up for Good press release.

Motz will load up his bike with everything he needs to survive and plans to sleep outside in hammocks and tents and get by with the help of generous strangers.

He won't be off the grid, though, as he plans to blog, upload a live feed through his GoPro and podcast his journey so people back home can follow along. Motz's bike has an internal generator that will power all of his equipment and the footage, blog and podcast will be posted on the Gearing up for Good website.

Prepping for the trip of a lifetime

Though Motz has never taken on a challenge quite as large as this one – the closest he came was when he biked 1,400 miles from Cincinnati to Columbus to Cleveland to Chicago and back to visit all of his children – he has been training for months to get ready.

He wakes up at 4:30 a.m. every weekday to ride 30 miles before work. During the weekend, he rides even further. He's also been doing TRX, rowing, pilates and yoga.

"I just try to mix up both the exercise as well as doing more mindfulness, breathing exercises and freeing the mind at the start of each day," Motz said.

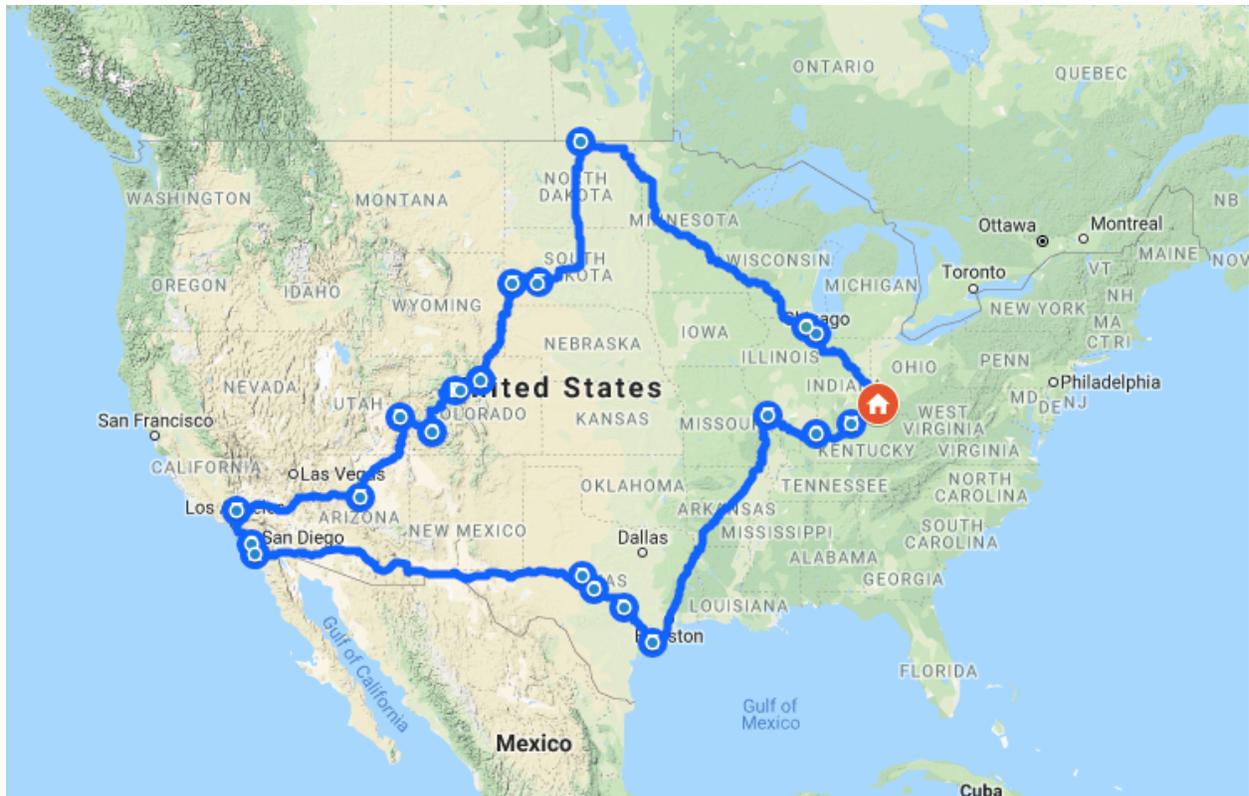
Motz said the challenge will be largely physical, but he also knows it will take a good deal of mental strength. He said the mental challenge of the ride will help him relate to how people with Parkinson's feel.

"It becomes so mental when you can't do things you used to take for granted, you get so frustrated," Motz said of suffering from Parkinson's.

He plans to take a number of safety precautions such as only riding during daylight hours and carefully choosing the places he will sleep at night.

Motz said he is most looking forward to seeing the different landscapes [as he travels from Cincinnati to the top of North Dakota](#), out to California, down to Houston and back up to Ohio.

"We're all bound together, but it's so cool how diverse we are as we look across the country," Motz said.



Motz will have a [send-off](#) on Friday, Aug. 2, where he'll ride with 100 other bikers from Lunken airport to Fountain square, escorted by the police. He is set to leave Lunken at 9 a.m. and arrive in Fountain square at 10 a.m., where the public is invited to see him off and wish him luck as he embarks on his journey.