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[Coquitlam 'Stair Master' Challenge Attracts Elite Tower Climber](#)



**AUGUST 18, 2018** — Coquitlam Crunch Diversity Challenge organizers created the [Stair Master](#) component of the event three years ago to provide another option for fitness advocates to support the [charity that promotes diversity](#). The *Stair Master* sees competitors running up the 437 timber west stairs of the Coquitlam Crunch trail to determine the fastest 'Stair Master' in four ages groups for both male and female athletes. The *Stair Master* is the first event of the day and will start promptly at 8 a.m.

This year, elite tower climber [Shaun Stephens-Whale](#) of Roberts Creek, B.C. will be joining those vying for the title on Saturday, Sept. 8 and he's registered in the 16 – 35 age group. Shaun is known for competing in such stair races as the [Eiffel Tower climb](#) in Paris, France; the Rainier Tower climb in Seattle, Washington; and he's the current record-holder for the the [CN Tower climb](#) in Toronto.

The 28-yr-old said his love for running started at the age of 12, when he saw a brochure for the BC Lung Association Climb the Wall event at the Sheraton Wall Centre. “At the time I already considered myself a serious runner, competing in many of the Vancouver’s local road races. The thought of running up a building was both a nauseating and exhilarating proposition – one that still captivates me to this day.” Shaun prepared for that first race by sprinting up and down the single flight of stairs in his living room while his dad sat on a couch, encouraging him and calling out splits. “50 times up, that was the goal, and four minutes of burning would just about get me there.”

“Of all the different types of training I do, none puts the body in more agony than a hard stair workout: lungs burning, legs flushed with lactic acid, vision squeezed as stars start to appear in your periphery,” said the former University of Victoria student who has decided to chase his dream of becoming one of the best tower runners in the world.

Tower running has seen tremendous growth with races occurring all across the globe and federations like [towerrunning.com](http://towerrunning.com) vetting for the world’s best racers. Alongside the growth in competitiveness, stair climbing as a fitness and wellness tool is becoming more recognized with campaigns such as Take the Stairs Day. “This shouldn’t be surprising,” says Shaun, “as there is perhaps no better way of getting a quick, effective, full body workout than going up stairs.”

Although Shaun is now a serious contender for the 2018 *Stair Master* title at the 2018 Coquitlam Crunch Diversity Challenge, there are four age groups (15 yrs and under, 16 – 35 yrs, 36 – 64 yrs, 65 yrs or over) in both male and female divisions. A total of 24 medals (gold, silver, bronze) will be handed out for the *Stair Master*.

In 2016, the inaugural *Stair Master* had only nine people take part and [Trevor Schmidt](#) was the overall winner with a time of 2:08. With the event growing to twenty-five competitors in 2017, the overall winner was [Steven Hughes](#) with a time of 2:00. Despite doubling in size, the *Stair Master* only saw two competitors in the 15 and under age group, and that was Nathan Chow and Liepa Bajarunas, who both walked away with a gold medal. There were no entrants in the 65+ age group.

“We’re very excited to have Shaun competing this year!” said Alex Bell, event founder. “So many people come to the Crunch just to do the stairs. We know the *Stair Master* will grow, and we want to encourage all ages to try it. I know that there are some fit seniors out there, because I see them on the Crunch, and there are loads of Tri-Cities youth that would make the stairs look easy.”

The *Stair Master* will see competitors starting at 30 second intervals, and those that cannot make it to the top on a run, are asked to step to the side path to continue up walking, as not to impede the next contestant. The Crunch trail remains open to the public during the challenge, but the west stairs will be closed from 8 – 8:30 a.m. for the *Stair Master*. Crunch users will be

able to cross over and use the new east stairs during that time.

Online registration is now underway thanks to [Running Room](#), and timing is being handled by [Trio Sports Events](#). Registration for the *Stair Master* is also available on event day (on location) at 7 a.m. — *Stair Master* starts at 8 a.m. sharp. Registering online allows you to pick up your race kit in advance.

The 9th annual Coquitlam Crunch Diversity Challenge supports the Coquitlam Foundation's Community Diversity Fund, as well as the Dogwood Seniors Society's dragon boat team, Nothin' Dragon and their youth mentoring programs.

The 2018 event is supported by New Earth Marketing, Sandpiper Signs & Decals, On Track Dental, Oddball Workshop Apparel, Joep Olthuis of Shutter Up & Shoot, The Tri-City News, Yellow Dog Brewing, Mariner Brewing, Magenta Printing & Imaging, City of Coquitlam, snapd Tri-Cities, Vancity, Body by Brandt, Rod Macbeth, Pasta Polo, Eagle Ridge Chevrolet Buick GMC, Coquitlam Chrysler, Optimum Family Chiropractic, Shaunnessy Veterinary Clinic, lululemon, Starbucks, Jurgen Kaminski, and Hydro Pop Event Services Inc.

Get a reminder by RSVPing at the [Facebook event page](#).

*The Coquitlam Crunch 'Diversity' Challenge is an annual event founded by Tri-City's resident Alex Bell, which celebrates diversity and supports the [Nothin' Dragon Masters](#) senior dragon boat team and their community programs, and the [Coquitlam Foundation's 'Diversity' Fund](#). The event started in 2010 and takes place at the Coquitlam Crunch hiking trail in B.C., Canada. The event started in 2010 and takes place at the Coquitlam Crunch hiking trail in B.C., Canada. The Challenge features a Stair Master competition; the [Make It Or Break It](#) 4-hour competition; and a [Recreational](#) category.*

Also:

[Coquitlam Crunch 'Stair Master' Competitors Challenged to Beat Helsinki's World's Fastest Stair Run!](#)

#### **Contacts:**

Event founder, Alex Bell: 604-512-5893 [abell.diversity@gmail.com](mailto:abell.diversity@gmail.com)

Event co-chair, Brian Kenny: 604-817-5961 [bjkenny1@gmail.com](mailto:bjkenny1@gmail.com)

[www.coquitlamcrunch.com](http://www.coquitlamcrunch.com)