



‘Nothing can STOP US!’

Climbing mountains, running marathons and cycling 100 miles after recovering from life-saving surgery: these women prove you can do anything you set your mind to

‘I faced my demons and finally found the joy in running’

When Victoria Tretis, 42, ran the London Marathon, she decided to forget about her time and have the best experience possible.

I’ve never considered myself sporty or athletic and have memories of being called thunder thighs at school! I have tried running at different times in my life, but I am not a natural runner.

When my daughter, Freya, was little, I bought a running pushchair and one day she shouted, ‘Mummy, why aren’t we going faster? Everyone’s overtaking us!’ Fitting running into my routine was near impossible and I fell out of love with it.

I took to indoor biking, which was nowhere near as satisfying. I also had developed plantar fibroma, a lump on one foot, and was advised to reduce how much I cycled. I turned back to an old friend, running.

Around the same time, a good friend wanted to get fitter, so we joined a gym together and headed straight for the treadmills. Once we got going, I realised I could do more than I thought, albeit at a very slow speed.

As my recovery continued, I wanted to set myself a challenge and thought about the London Marathon. I had run it before – pre-baby – but had got so bogged down in tracking my stats, such as heart rate, that I sucked all the joy out of it. On the day, I didn’t get the time I wanted. It didn’t feel like an achievement; I didn’t even want to look at my medal.

Over a decade later, I decided I should face the London Marathon and my inner demons once more, but this time ditching the trackers and doing it for the pure enjoyment. I knew it would be difficult, but I needed to revisit the Marathon and have a more positive experience.



I got a selfie with a runner dressed as Chewbacca



I got a charity place running for the Miscarriage Association, a charity very close to my heart as I’ve suffered several miscarriages in the past.

Alongside my physio, training for the Marathon

helped me to recover from the plantar fibroma. I did a combination of treadmill running at the gym and solo runs outside.

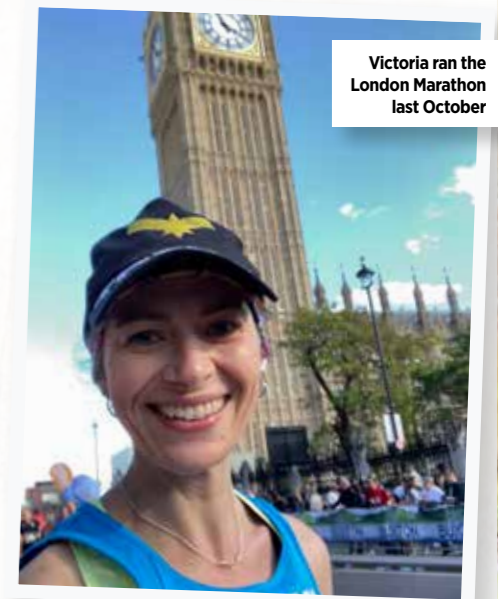
The Marathon was last October. In the weeks leading up, I felt apprehensive. As I stood at the start line, I had a little cry, wondering why I was putting myself through this again. Nevertheless, once I started, the endorphins kicked in and I had a brilliant race. I did as I intended and soaked up the positive, carnival atmosphere. I had my name on my bib so people cheered me on and I high-fived more people that day than I ever have in my life. I was so unbothered about my pacing that I stopped to pick up a child who had wandered on to the course and got a selfie with a runner dressed as Chewbacca.

Crossing the finishing line in five hours 20 minutes, I was a little in

disbelief that I had done it. I was immensely proud of myself, not just for completing it, but for being present and actually enjoying it, as well as raising £1,745 for a good cause.

Now I have my fitness mojo back, I’m training for a triathlon this year – that’s a 1.2-mile swim and 56-mile bike ride, followed by a half marathon.

My advice to others wanting to run a marathon is to think, ‘What small thing can I do today that will get me closer to that goal?’ It might be looking for charity places, applying for the ballot or downloading the Couch to 5K app. After that, it’s just consistency, little by little – you’ll get there. If I can, so can you.



Victoria ran the London Marathon last October