

## Maintaining a Cheerful Disposition in the face of Adversity

Having suffered my first serious running injury and determined not to become a Chronic Achilles bore (not sure if I quite succeeded here!) I decided to endeavour to try to maintain some level of fitness and not become a complete lard a\*\*e, whilst also avoiding slumping into the depths of self-pity. This noble intention greatly benefited several parties 1. Blazing Saddles 2. the physio 3. the gym and 4. my husband who used my sudden unfortunate incapacity to abandon his family at every opportunity and train like a demon.

So, having spent my kid's inheritance at the physio I decided it was time to push the boundaries and get out on a bike (having previously restricted myself to gentle pootles along the canal on a push up basket bicycle with my little boys, bellowing after them 'don't go near the edge'. An experience that wasn't particularly enjoyable for any of us). So, weighing up the merits of road v off road and with contradictory advice ringing in my ear I opted to have a go on a mountain bike (primarily to please my sons who are all desperate to leave me for dead on the hills). I decided, rather than be foolhardy and just buy a decent entry level bike outright, I'd be sensible and hire one out first. So, I hobbled around to Blazing Saddles where young George kitted me out with the 'Daddy' (or should I say Mummy) of the Marin range (he even lent me a hat, sorry helmet, and a water bottle). He looked a bit anxious when I asked him how the gears and brakes worked and he quickly decided now wasn't the right time to explain disc brakes, full suspension system, slick tyres etc. Nevertheless, he pushed me off in the right direction and told me to pedal fast and don't look down...

Seven hours later I returned bruised, bloodied, dehydrated, slightly manic but happy with my new hobby. I loved it! The crazy descents, the technical twists and turns, the friendly cyclists I met on route (all of whom looked mightily impressed with the bike that I was riding) It all went to my head, so the following morning, stiff in places that shall remain unmentionable, I returned to Blazing Saddles cheque book in hand. Having now experienced the magic carpet ride offered by the Marin Mount Vision I had to have it. So, with a little help from the 'bike to work' scheme I became the proud owner, and they even threw in the helmet. I left the shop having made friends with Ollie, Al and George etc (they loved me ... easiest sale they've ever made).

Encouraged by Rachel Skins who introduced me to the delights of following hard working fell runners whilst on our bikes shouting out words of encouragement ... , then taking them out on the descents (well not you Phil!). Having survived several endurance routes with Rachel (usually trying desperately hard to keep up with her on the ascents, but failing ... then scaring her half to death on the downs) she taught me the etiquette with gates, bells and the need to share with fellow cyclists tales of amazing kamikaze descents, new undiscovered tracks and technical wizardry. We enjoyed fracas with grumpy rambles and quickly bonded over a true love of getting mucky out on the moors (I'm still waiting for a puncture repair lesson - lets hope don't suffer one whilst out on my own)

The downside, however, is the fact that you have to go out on a bike for at least three hours to truly benefit (and yes you were right Chris and John a cyclo cross would have been better for fitness, but I'm afraid I rather shallowly opted for the pure fun route, however, I am now saving for my snake!). So, as a busy working mother of three and in order to stay married it became evident that a professional mountain bike career wasn't an option (yet!), so I also joined the gym (another first). Now if you're going to have to hit the gym Waterside is probably one of the least intimidating; full of friendly Hebden Bridge types in a strange assortment of gym get ups, without a six pack in sight. However, the boredom nearly saw me off before I even started. Until that is, I was introduced to the mighty, if not mythical cross trainer - the Arc! Determined to conquer the beast I set myself increasingly tricky uphill programmes and contrived to be there at quiet times when I wouldn't be kicked off after 15 minutes. Not for the faint hearted but convinced it must be doing some good if the sweat levels and scary heart rate monitor were anything to go by, I soon found that I could easily wile away an hour. I even tried out the weights but caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror and scared that I was increasingly looking like a ripped Madonna (..umm), or more realistically a German shot putter, I decided it was finally time to try a gentle jog on the flat to Mytholmroyd and back.

The good news is 8 weeks later (and with a large hole in my pocket and very slightly better defined pecs and abs!) I can run again, slowly, cautiously but without searing pain. I even managed to run up to Sheep Stones the other day with my 11 year son Luka (I couldn't keep up with him but I did make it home in one piece). So, I'm hoping my days at the gym are numbered, but I will still keep getting out on my bike – cross training is the way forward (at least till I've paid the loan off!)

On a final note thanks to all of the advice, words of encouragement and shared tales of woe that have been offered to me over the last few months. I never realised how much fellow runners love discussing injuries (and if you're not one of them then I can only apologise profusely for having bored the pants of you lately)



Lucy Hobbs