

A Year Like No Other - 2020

March 2020, one year ago, I can remember being in the OCL Chadderton gym speaking to friends in my body pump class about other countries that were going into lockdown and was that going to happen to us here in the UK???

Panic buying had commenced, and if you don't already know I work for Sainsburys as a project manager, so work was crazy we were taking millions more each day than normal, you couldn't get toilet roll, pasta or chopped tomatoes without bribing somebody!!

I had already started to look to buy some weights, pre-empting gyms closing, that would enable me to still train from home, but it seemed I wasn't the only one thinking this, as many other people had done the same and they were like unicorn poo to get hold of!!! Then the news came, we were going into lockdown on 23rd March and as I walked out of the gym on my last visit, I tried my best to convince the staff at the gym to let me take some weights home, I offered a deposit, not to cancel my membership, even a job at Sainsburys (as they were all going to be not working for the foreseeable future and we were taking on people for fun!!) but this wasn't something anybody had prepared for and they were just looking at me blankly not knowing themselves if they had to go into work the next morning.

Panic started to set in a little, you might be thinking I'm over exaggerating or being a bit dramatic, but you may not know that I was once almost 15st (picture for evidence) and trying to keep slim is important for me (an obsession if I'm honest), I'm not blessed with genes which mean I can eat what I like and it's one of the main reasons that I run, I can eat a bit more!!



Lockdown started, I've worked from home for over 10 years so no real big changes there, we just started using Microsoft Teams instead of phone calls and I didn't have to get up as early as I no longer had to travel to London a couple of days a week (although I do miss it a little bit). However not being able to go to the gym or do club training runs was going to be strange and challenging, for my own mental and physical wellbeing and that is where 2020 actually hasn't been too bad for me and has made me do things that otherwise maybe I wouldn't have.



I knew that I had to focus on things within my control, I couldn't control what other people did or didn't do, I couldn't influence Boris on what he was or wasn't going to decide for the country, so I started to set myself (and some of you) some little challenges. From Plank Challenge to Monthly Virtual races as well as Marathon Majors and 30 day Yoga. Each month there was something that I had to focus on that gave me a bit more of an incentive or a target for that day, I was also hoping that these challenges would motivate some other club members and having you guys there made these challenges easier/more important to complete. This seems an appropriate time to say thank you to everybody who has joined the virtual socials or quiz/presentation nights especially to Kevin Hutchings and Mandy Richardson who I think have been to every single one and to Gail Shaw for not only being my running buddy throughout but also for doing every challenge with me over this mad year.

I set myself some personal goals too, I eventually managed to get some weights (being able to see Argos stock was helpful) and after attending initial Les Mills Body Pump training in Dec of 2019 I completed my final assessment and passed in August 2020. This was a big motivator for me and kickstarted a new chapter in my lockdown journey. I'd participated in classes for around 20 years and have always enjoyed Les Mills classes and wanted to be an instructor but just



never got around to it, there was always an excuse. Lockdown allowed me to focus on something I was really enjoying and gained a sense of achievement from. In December 2020 I completed Advanced Body Pump training and qualified in another Les Mills Programme called Body Combat, I won't lie I'm now totally obsessed with Les Mills (I even have two sets of their weights which cost a fortune). Unfortunately, I only managed to teach in gyms about 10 times before we went into full lockdown again but hoping that I'll still have my Sunday class at Total Fitness when they reopen in May.

Since the start of 2021 I've continued to challenge myself with little goals and as 2020 was filled with lots of disappointments, I've started to focus on gratitude, every night I write 3 things that I'm thankful for, just to remind myself that despite the changes, problems, difficulties that we might moan about there is still a lot to be grateful for every day, friends, sunshine, committee meetings!!



Unfortunately, my fitness and positive focus didn't protect me from getting injured, which has meant I've not ran properly for several weeks, but I'm just starting to get back and hope to be leading a group at the end of March, watch out I might throw in some additional squats or lunges on route!!

So, the Covid Pandemic overall hasn't been a disaster for me, I've spent more time with my husband, I've decorated most of my house, converted my garage to a gym and saved a fortune (hence the Les Mills weights).

The morale of my Lockdown Tale is:

- Focus on things you can control and set yourself little challenges
- Stay positive and be grateful for what you have
- Find something you enjoy and do more of it, but not if that is drinking Gin! It might be jigsaws, knitting, reading books or as we are a running club, maybe running?!

Martina