

Meet Claire Allen



1. Which sport or physical activity are you currently involved in?
I play hockey and netball for local teams, take ballet classes and swim once a week and also help deliver Hockey and netball sessions to disability clubs in a school setting. I also enjoy tennis, badminton, surfing, skateboarding, snowboarding and running as hobbies when time, money and holidays allow.
2. How did you get involved in the sport/activity?
I started getting back into sport with England Hockey's back to Hockey scheme. I had recently had my second baby and wanted to get fit again and make some time for myself, Hockey was a sport that I had loved at school and when this campaign was launched it was something I really wanted to get involved with.
3. What do you enjoy most about being active?
I most enjoy how being active makes me feel, I could have had a bad day at work or be feeling under the weather and sport always helps to make that feel better and lift my spirits, it lifts my mood and helps me to feel relaxed. I also love being part of a team, I have made some amazing friends through team sports and classes and I look forward to being with them every week.
4. Who (or what) inspired you to get involved in sport/physical activity?
I have always found sport inspiring, following most sports actively, either through live events or televised sports. Women in sport seem to be achieving so much these days and it is hard not to be inspired by people like Kate Richardson-Walsh, Jo Harten, Alex Danson, Ellie Simmonds and Sarah Storey. It was something I wanted to be part of, if only in a small way.
5. What has been your biggest challenge in sport/physical activity and how did you overcome it?
I have suffered with my mental health over the years, suffering from crippling anxiety that at times was completely debilitating. My passion for sport was often over shadowed by my health and I missed sessions, games and matches when it was the last thing I wanted. I worked hard to get back the realisation that activity was key to my recovery and take the support from the great network of team mates and colleagues to pull myself through and get myself back on even ground and loving getting out and taking part again.

6. How have you made being active work for you and your lifestyle? (Have you had to juggle childcare / work responsibilities for example?)
I had such a young family when I first started back in sport, my daughter was only 3 months old when I first went back in to Hockey, and juggling those commitments while finding time to keep myself fit and active was a juggle but it was something we were able to overcome and make work for my family. Sport is not always cheap, affiliation fees, subs, kitted equipment and training costs have all stacked up over the years but definitely something I consider a worthwhile spend.
7. What are your personal goals regarding sport/physical activity in the future?
My goals are to progress myself within my chosen sports, I would love to get into umpiring, I want to take more courses in coaching, but also I just want to be able to continue to progress my own game, get better, work harder and keep fit, happy and healthy.
8. What has been your biggest achievement since becoming active?
What I am most proud of is the doors that sport has opened up for me, my passion for sport has driven me to work in sports writing in my spare time, following sports teams and completions and blogging about them. This has lead me to work with two fantastic companies, Support through Sport UK, who work to raise the profile of women's and disability sports, and The Hockey Family, who promote all aspects of Hockey from grass roots to international cover. I have worked all over the world for these companies, covering international competitions in Wheelchair Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball, Athletics, Golf, Netball, Hockey, Swimming and Cycling and most recently going t the Gold Coast to report on The Commonwealth Games. Through my decision to get out and get back into sport all these other opportunities have since presented themselves and given me life changing experiences.