



Reminiscences of a Fitness Expert

ultra-FIT contributor Caroline Pearce is a former International athlete who represented Great Britain at the European Cup athletics Championships in 2004 and at the World Bobsleigh Championships in 2005. She has two degrees, is a fitness cover model, training and education consultant, motivational speaker, businesswoman, TV Gladiator 'Ice' and a presenter who is currently interviewing the strongest men in the world on the International Strongman circuit.

Here she shares many of the experiences and opportunities that have come her way in the sport and fitness industry as well as some of the lessons she has learnt.

Sporting Background

When I first started playing sport it was for no other reason than enjoyment. I loved all sports, but eventually decided to concentrate on athletics, where I could run, throw and jump. Naturally this inclined me toward the heptathlon. Heptathletes compete in seven track and field events over two days - the winner is the athlete that scores the most total points. My biggest achievement came when I was selected to represent Great Britain in the European Cup event in 2004. There is no other feeling that matches competing for your country and knowing that all the hard winter training sessions out in the

cold, late at night and in the early mornings, have paid off. What I didn't expect was that I'd soon be exchanging my track spikes for ice ones and hurtling down a bobsleigh track! I can only describe the feeling as something akin to being in a washing machine! That first slide, at 7am, minus 17 degrees C, in Calgary, was both the most petrifying yet exhilarating thing I've ever experienced. Feeling 5 G's of force and traveling at 80mph in an open metal sled down an unfamiliar track is something I could never have imagined. But that's the beauty of sport... pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone and into new territory, confronting fears and obstacles and

then overcoming them.

I've always wanted to be the best at what I do and my dream was to be an Olympic athlete. However, sadly I found I had extensive damage to my left knee shortly after my bobsleigh experience, and my dream was shattered. I understood that training as an athlete pushes your body to extremes and that my 'all or nothing mentality' had ultimately resulted in injury. For a while I felt I'd lost my identity and was unsure what path to follow. But I transferred my discipline, hard work and determination into the workplace and have built a career and lifestyle based on my love and passion for all things energetic.



Trainer to teach accredited courses to trainers, physios and osteopaths all over the country. Working for a corporate fitness company has enabled me to develop my business skills and adapt my education to the real world.

My aim before I turn 30 is to have my own business and I'm on track to achieving that

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goal. I'm going to utilise my nutrition masters degree to create an online diet plan to help people reach their weight loss goals. Watch this space!

International Fitness Experience

I've been lucky enough to have traveled the globe teaching, presenting and modeling. My favourite place for fitness is the USA. The industry there is huge and there are just so many enthusiasts and new concepts to try. I spent some time training in Gold's Gym, Venice Beach - and I was fascinated by all the extreme bodybuilders lifting ridiculously heavy weights and comparing biceps. And I'm not just talking about the men! Training in America is fun. You can be mid-effort on the treadmill and somebody will lean over and start chatting to you! At first I was put off at the interruption but I

Entering the Corporate Fitness World

I first started work as a sports model and represented brands such as adidas and Nike doing photoshoots, commercials and catwalk shows. It was at this time that I studied further how to manipulate my diet to achieve the physique that I wanted as opposed to eating purely for performance. I began calculating my energy intake precisely and following a diet higher in protein and lower in starchy carbs. I realised the importance of good fats (omega 3 and 6) for maintaining healthy cell function, skin and hair.

I also wanted to use my education, by chance I was discovered by Power Plate (makers of vibration training equipment Ed). Training on the machine had an amazing effect on my knee rehabilitation following surgery and I was developed as a Master





soon adopted the same approach of sharing training tips, asking questions and generally enjoying my workout time. Training can become stale for even the most adventurous of us so it's nice to befriend like-minded people. I also had the chance in America to train celebrities at their Hollywood homes, where their personal gyms were the size of swimming pools. But the best bit was training the Oceans 13 film cast. The perks of the job! Brad Pitt, George Clooney hmmm.

Fitness and TV

Now this is where my passion really lies... in television. Until recently it was unlikely you'd see many, if any, fitness programs on TV in the UK. It's different in the States where they have been pumping out fitness commercials and fitness channels for years. There are the hour long commercials full of testimonials and fitness experts and presenters telling you how a particular piece of equipment will help you drop 'x' number of pounds and tone up your entire body. Sounds cheesy but guess what, I became one of those presenters! For the first time in ages I felt the same buzz, adrenaline rush and excitement that I had felt as a competing athlete.

Fitness and Health are now rightly receiving TV coverage in this country with their own dedicated channels for which I've been presenting on.

I'm currently spending my weekends surrounded by the strongest men in the world!

Gladiators Ready!

My most exciting TV role to date was playing the character 'Ice' in the TV show Gladiators for Sky 1. Having been a big fan of the original series I jumped at the chance to try out for the revival of the show and after grueling strength tests, wrestling matches and acting to camera I was chosen as one of the six females in a selection process not too dissimilar to the X-factor! Being a Gladiator meant spending every day in lycra (and not much of it!), playing games in a giant kid's playground and in my case putting on a stern 'icey' look for the camera! My body took a bashing, with tendonitis, twisted ankles and general bruising, but I survived and showed my dominance in the events of 'powerball', 'hang tough' and the 'wall'. The contact events were a new experience for me (in athletics we're provided with our own lane with no interference) but I soon toughened up. I now enjoy boxing and kickboxing workouts to vent any frustrations! Being a Gladiator gave me the opportunity to be a role model

for young females and to show them that having a fit healthy body is more desirable than being stick thin and starving yourself. It has been really rewarding to share my nutrition and training knowledge with those who watched and enjoyed the show.

Strongman Presenting

I'm currently spending my weekends surrounded by the strongest men in the world! I've just started presenting 'International Strongman' events for Eurosport. Have you ever seen a man pull a 25 tonne truck or lift 400kg, that's the weight of a car, from the ground? It's just incredible to watch and I'm the first in line to tackle them with questions whilst they struggle to recover and grab their breath! It's great to be a part of a sporting event again and to use my knowledge of training and my media experience to bring the audience the information they need and want to know.

To find out more about Caroline and read her latest news go to:

www.carolinepearce.co.uk **UF**