

Can Someone with MS Exercise?



"I can't do that I have MS"

"I would never manage it"

"I'd love to do it but I just couldn't"

"I'm too tired to exercise"

This is what I used to say to myself for at least 5 years after my diagnosis.

But then I realized something.

I realized my fatigue, brain fog, optic neuritis pain and acne was getting worse.

I couldn't bring a basket of clothes upstairs to put away because I was too exhausted.

I am 28 years old.

I decided this wasn't how I wanted my life to be. I realized I was letting MS win by telling myself, "I can't do that" over and over.

Well, no more.

After only being able to take my dog, Lucy, for very short walks at a time, I felt I owed it to her to take her further. I decided to go beyond that and give running a go.

The only problem was I had never been running. I'm definitely not athletic nor have I ever been.

That first time, I remember feeling really good and motivated about it. I felt like I was beating

MS. But it was hard. I hurt both my knees after my dog pulled me and I nearly fell. Still, I carried on regardless. The first few times I came home and fell asleep for a few hours. But that's ok, because I understood that my body was not used to this type of movement and it was adjusting.

After going a few times, I began to actually enjoy it. I started off not being able to run for more than 20 seconds at a time. Over a few weeks I went from 20 seconds, to 60 seconds, to 90 seconds and now, I can run for almost 20 minutes! I've set myself the aim of doing a 5K race in a few months time, and everytime I run, I imagine what that day would be like. I imagine myself crossing over that finishing line with a crowd around me cheering me on. I imagine the huge amount of accomplishment I would feel and that's what keeps me going.

The hardest part was starting.

But what I found after going running really surprised me.

I actually have MORE energy now.

My brain fog is much better.

I have a lot less optic neuritis pain.

My acne prone skin cleared up at last.

I feel happier, less depressed and less anxious.

I then wanted to see what else I could push my MS to do. I decided to accept the challenge of doing all the things that I said "no" to over the previous years.

So I went rock climbing and bouldering—never done that before!



I now have plans to go canoeing (this will test my balance—which is often not that great). I'm also a little scared of water.

I'm also documenting all of these activities across my Facebook channel (search "Jessie Ace")

or “ENabled Warriors”) to show my progress and keep me accountable.

Through all this, the main thing that I’ve learnt is not to give in to my body.

I’ve learnt that my mind is stronger than my body and whatever my mind says, goes. My body is like a slave to my mind.

My point is, the only excuses are the ones in your head because adapted activities and better technology are all around us now. The accessibility of the world gets better every day, and we are incredibly lucky.

The possibilities of activities these days are endless! You don’t have to give up the things you once loved doing because of your MS—there are ways around so much.