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How we keep fit..



"I completed the London Triathlon for the Transplant Trust"

"I rowed the Atlantic to fundraise for epilepsy research"

"I taught yoga to genocide survivors in Rwanda"

"I climbed Kilimanjaro to support wounded soldiers"

"I cycled across India to raise money for Unicef"

JESS THOMPSON, 43
 Founder of Water Babies
 (waterbabies.co.uk)



MY MOTIVATION

"Three years after my second child was born, I was stuck in a post-pregnancy phase, feeling old and overweight. I hadn't done any meaningful exercise in years and was pretty unfit. I was working full-time, and so heading out to the gym instead of spending time with my husband and children wasn't an appealing option. When my friend turned 40, however, she did a cycle ride in Vietnam for charity and I was completely inspired. I was 39, and decided to mark my own milestone birthday with a similar challenge for Unicef. I contacted Charity

Challenge, a tour operator helping people organise adventurous challenges who helped me organise a cycle ride across India in aid of Unicef. I didn't set out to get a fabulous body; my motivation was marking my 40th birthday by doing something positive. Helping others gave me a good reason to use some of my limited spare time to train."

REACHING MY GOAL
 "Training was difficult, with work and my children to think about. But I was nervous of how hard the cycling would be, so I made time to fit in three hours of cycling every week, using any

free evening or weekend. I also took the fundraising seriously, preparing an information pack to show sponsors where their money would be spent. Feeling my stamina increase and my body tone up was a huge bonus."

MY REWARD

"That first cycle across India was so wonderful that two years later I signed up to ride from the Andes to the Amazon in Peru, and in November 2009, I cycled across Vietnam. I've slept in old Raj palaces, bathed in an Amazonian stream and been clubbing until 4am in Saigon – experiences I wouldn't swap for the world. From the first →

BODY & SOUL

The fitness and fundraising phenomenon shows little sign of abating, with more and more women taking up ever more interesting challenges at home and abroad. And, by helping others in a whole range of meaningful ways, they gain far more than just a better body in the process. If you're in need of inspiration to get out of your fitness rut, read on... →

BY IOHANNA PAYTON PHOTOGRAPHS NEALE HAYNES

Health