

LIFE OUT ON HER LIMBS

Linda Barker

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Press Coverage

Linda Barker sprang to our attention as an expert interior designer and more recently we noticed her striking form on ITV's *Splash*; she talks to UK Women about the significance of yoga and walking in her life

LINDA YOU RECENTLY CAME TO PROMINENCE FOR YOUR SPORTY PHYSIQUE - CAN YOU TALK US THROUGH GETTING IN SHAPE?

I'm the sort of person that gets a little tetchy if I haven't done some physical activity most days. My body simply feels sluggish if it hasn't moved for a while. The computer and office isn't my most natural habitat!

I love long distance walking; ten hour walking days are heaven for me and if I can do this every day for five days or more then I consider this a real treat. I recently walked west to east through the Lake District at high level, on part of the lovely coast to coast paths. It's such a wonderful way to be in the outdoors and a great way to connect with nature and take things at walking pace for a change. Walking has always been a revelation to me and I love doing long distance - I used to walk 10 miles to my boyfriend's house when I was 16 or 17. I have a couple of groups who I currently walk with and I have a big walk planned most years - we raise money for charity but also do it for the sheer love of it - I just think it's a lovely thing to do. You find some incredible B&Bs and of course enjoy a G&T or two along the way!

Yoga will also always be part of my life and I am getting into meditation and mindfulness. The simple breath can nurture your body in ways I never really thought about before. The physical benefits are strength and suppleness without stressing the body or pushing it too hard. Vinyasa yoga is one of my favourites and I have an app on my phone by Rebekkah LaDyne (Mindfulness, Meditation and Yoga teacher) so that I can do yoga whenever the mood takes me.

I got into yoga as a result of a damaged ligament - a meniscus tear in my knee - I was really saddened by it as it meant I couldn't run anymore - but it pushed me into doing yoga as an alternative - so I turned my injury into a positive. It is quite challenging but I feel that I am really on my yoga journey.

My trainer in the gym - who I've seen twice a week for almost ten years - is the one who should get the credit for my abs though! I work out seriously when I'm with him in the gym. I cycle a fair bit in London too- it's the best way to get around the city I find.

YOU'VE TALKED IN THE PAST ABOUT HOW COMING THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE HAS MADE YOU STRONGER - CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HELPED YOU THROUGH THE TRANSITION?

Diet and exercise helped me through the most difficult parts of the menopause. I decided to run the marathon the year I turned 50 and the training helped reduce the fairly ghastly effects of the menopause quite significantly. I did become quite unusually anxious at times, I slept badly at night for a while and I hated the horrible hot flushes. But being strong in my body really helped and having several physical challenges ahead of me really strengthened my resolve to get through it all, that and hearing that the hot flushes are called 'power surges' in the States really helped!

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON PLASTIC SURGERY AND SO CALLED 'NON-INVASIVE' TREATMENTS SUCH AS FILLERS AND LINE-SOFTENING TREATMENTS?

I know that happiness and confidence in our own skin is absolutely the most beautiful thing that shows in a woman's face. But as we age it doesn't hurt to use a helping hand if that's what makes you happy. Personally I prefer to use a good face cream, with a serum that is proven to stimulate collagen production, eat well and get a good night's sleep- but there's no way I'll judge anyone for doing exactly what they want to do with their own bodies.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU LINDA?

Long walks - more yoga and doing more of what makes me and my loved ones happy I hope.





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