
MY LIFE IN HEALTH

‘WE’RE WISER AND KNOW OURSELVES BETTER’

Broadcaster and Gold Radio presenter Kirsty Gallacher, 49, talks to Joanna Ebsworth about having radiotherapy for her benign tumour, swapping running for reformer Pilates, and why she thinks age doesn't matter.

I had to leave the GB News Breakfast Show in 2021 for a few reasons. I've done various breakfast shows in my life, but I was getting up way earlier than I've ever done before and I just wasn't getting enough sleep. I was finding it horrendously stressful, and when I was diagnosed with an acoustic neuroma in my right ear, which is a type of benign tumour, I just felt I needed a minute to regroup. I'd only been there six months, and they didn't want me to go, but I felt in my gut it was the right thing to do. So, I carried on with my Saturday afternoon show on Smooth Radio, which I loved, and enjoyed the freelance life instead.

Learning I had a benign tumour was a huge health scare. It plateaued and didn't grow last year, but a few months ago, an annual MRI scan revealed it's growing again. Surgery would be dangerous because

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the acoustic neuroma is in the inner ear canal right by the brain, so radiotherapy is the only option to shrink it. My hearing in my right ear isn't great and that upsets me more than anything. I get more upset sometimes when I'm in environments where I can't hear properly. I have to remove myself otherwise it's awkward for me, so that's difficult. But the tumour isn't life-threatening, and it needs to be shrunk with the radiotherapy. That's it. I'm very lucky because it could have been far worse.

I've said no to a lot of TV work over the past few years. I've got to that age where I've become pickier, so it's got to slot around me and my kids and it's got to be on a subject I strongly believe in and want to use my time on, like my love for animals or a documentary on animal welfare. But I was ready for a new challenge, and I love doing

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radio, so, when one of my Global bosses asked me to record a demo for the big relaunch of Gold Radio, I jumped at the chance. Doing Smooth Radio on a Saturday was great but hosting my own drivetime show Monday to Friday is huge for me. Gold Radio plays a wonderful array of genres from the 60s to the early 90s, which I love. And I’ve already interviewed some incredible people including Edward Norton, Robert De Niro and Debra Messing. I’ve had to pinch myself at times! Plus my new hours are great. I get home slightly later, but I’ve got my mornings free to take my youngest son, Jude, to school, then work out, pop to Waitrose and do other projects and corporate events before driving to work.

I lost my love for training at the end of last year. There was a lot going on for me and even though I knew training would help, I just couldn’t do as much as I should have. But the lack of exercise made me feel horrendous because when I don’t train, it affects my head. If I’m brutally honest, I really need to train. Fitness is more than a physical thing that makes you look better. It’s about balancing emotions and looking after your mental health, because it’s well known that exercise releases serotonin and all the happy hormones. When I’m in a good training routine, I am much more balanced.

I don’t like running anymore. I’ve done two London marathons and while it was



important for me to do those to challenge myself and to raise money for charity, my body's not been the same since. I've ruined my feet and knees so my running days are over. But I'm really excited about discovering reformer Pilates, which I'm absolutely loving. My friends convinced me to try it and I put off going for a while because I wasn't sure it was very me, but now I love it! I'm going a couple of times a week. While I love weight training because it's very alpha, and I'm quite an alpha female, I find reformer Pilates to be the opposite because it's a form of parasympathetic training. It's almost meditative, and feeling calm and stretched out is wonderful for me right now. The machine also really challenges your muscles but supports your body, so I think there's less risk of injury. I've definitely got the bug, I must say!

I'm very healthy when it comes to food.

My mum's a dietitian, so we were brought up with proper knowledge about food and food groups, and we ate everything in moderation because she believes when you are denied something, such as sweets, you want it more. That's not to say I didn't play around with food in my teens. I didn't like getting hips and boobs when I went through puberty very late, and while I didn't have an eating disorder, I was weighing myself a bit too much and exercising a lot to be thinner. Even though I'm quite athletic, I've naturally got an hourglass figure with boobs, so I didn't find it easy growing up in the era of the supermodels. But my mum brilliantly ignored me and didn't make a meal of that situation, pardon the pun. She wisely said if she'd made more of it, it would have given it more oxygen, and that would've been the wrong thing to do.

It's very important I eat well to fuel my workouts.

Protein is so crucial, so it's a difficult one as an animal lover. I've been a vegetarian off and on all my life, but I think being a vegetarian makes me quite unwell sometimes, so eating meat is sort of one of those things where I've always gone back and forth, purely for my health. As my mum says, women need protein and B vitamins because we menstruate, and for other reasons, so it's a very tricky balance, especially if you're exercising. I eat quite a lot of fish and, occasionally, have some red meat. But if I didn't need to eat meat, I

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wouldn't. For me, it's all about buying meat responsibly now, because my boyfriend and children eat meat, and I certainly wouldn't stop others from doing so.

I do intermittent fasting a few times a week. It just works for me and feels good, whereas eating a massive meal late at night makes me feel awful. I also work with a brilliant sports nutrition brand called Kinetica and use their plant protein shakes to support my training as well as some of their supplements. I take vitamin D and omega-3 fish oils to support my system, and I've been taking evening primrose oil for my hormones for the past 30 years. I also take a brilliant supplement for perimenopause by Pippa Campbell. I've done some DNA tests with her, and she's given me the once over in terms of what my body needs.

I don't really like talking about perimenopause too much because it is what it is. Everyone navigates it differently and, if I'm honest, I don't feel very perimenopausal. I know it must be because of my age, and that is why I take a supplement, but I don't have any symptoms to talk about. That said, I do think it's brilliant that the conversation is out there. Why should it be a taboo subject? I just think women are amazing. We go through quite a lot in terms of reproduction, bearing children and going through menopause.

I don't know how on earth I'm 49. I just think, "Where did my 30s go?". I can barely

remember them because they were manic, and I was working full-time with two kids. I got divorced in my late 30s and ended up finding life hard for a few years, and then suddenly, you get to this age and wonder how you got here. It feels a bit weird to think I'll be 50 next year, but I really don't mind it as much as I thought I would. Being 48, 49 or 50 all becomes much of a muchness so long as you look after yourself, learn from your mistakes and decide wisely. One of the best things about being this age is you're wiser and you know yourself better.

I'm inspired by so many women in their early 50s – I think it's a really sexy age.

I love Cindy Crawford, Helena Christensen, Cate Blanchett and Penélope Cruz – they're all goddesses and amazing, so I just don't think age matters. It pisses me off and upsets me when people say I look "amazing for 49". Am I meant to look like a granny instead? I've never understood that. I know people don't mean it in a nasty way, but age is age. No one knows what age anyone is anymore because we all have healthier lives and live longer. I just think instead of saying, "Oh gosh, you look great for 49", just say, "You look great! How do you do that?". And I'll tell you that I eat healthily and I look after myself. You know what I mean? Let's just stop nitpicking about age.

Kirsty Gallacher plays *All Time Classics* on Gold Radio Drive, every weekday from 4-7pm. Catch-up episodes are available on the Global Player app. With thanks to Georgina Little for images (georginalittlephotography.co.uk), make-up by Natasha Chiverton Bulstrode, and Contur for clothing (conturuk.com).