

'MY LIFE IN A DAY'

CLAIRE TURPIN

The founder of Contur UK, talks about creating clothing that flatters every body

'Early workouts set me up for the day, so I get up at 6am to go to the gym before family breakfast time, where I'll have overnight oats and black coffee. After walking my two daughters to school, I head to my home office to do social media posts and respond to emails, texts and DMs from customers. I'll then go to meet my website builders and manufacturers, or network at fitness festivals and pop-up events, but my main priority is dealing with orders. My spare rooms are filled with stock, boxes, tissue paper and stickers, and I love writing handwritten notes for every delivery. I created my range to help women feel amazing in gym kit – hence my tag line, "You've got it, we flaunt it!" – so getting positive feedback saying my clothing has given them the confidence to go to the gym is everything to me'.

CAREER CHANGE

'Being sporty at school, I worked in a gym after leaving college while gaining qualifications to teach fitness and aerobics classes. I then went on to study for a degree in Exercise and Health Science. But after graduating in 2002, I was headhunted to work in recruitment. The money was great, and I enjoyed being able to exercise for myself again. After giving birth to my first child in 2010, I set up my own recruitment company looking after major clients such as Rolls Royce and Liverpool FC. But after having my second



Body-confident clothing



The sustainable fabrics use bold colourways

child, I struggled to find gym wear that flattered my figure and stopped going to the gym because I didn't feel confident enough. So, I resolved to create my own collection in 2018. After analysing what styles I liked; picking a bright and bold colour palette; deciding to use sustainable fabrics, and creating a scrap book of my ideas, I approached a manufacturer, but was told I needed a designer to put my ideas into a "technical pack". Two months later, I returned with proper designs and, after many rounds of samples, Contur UK (conturuk.com) went into production in February 2019.'

EMPOWERING ACTIVEWEAR

'After a lunch of chicken or halloumi salad, it's back to the school run at 3pm before returning to work, but I always stop to do a Spin class in the evening to switch off and recharge my batteries. Afterwards, I'll carry on working or chill out with a box set



Claire is on a mission to help change mindsets

over a dinner of workout-fuelling meat, veggies and carbs, and then set my objectives for the next day.

'My hope is that I've created a line of eco-friendly, figure-sculpting, stylish activewear women can rock for all occasions so they lead more active lifestyles – I love wearing my best-selling Step Up leggings with a crop top in the gym or a white t-shirt and leather jacket for a cool daytime sports luxe look. I've been that woman who lost her confidence and struggled with body image after having two children, and I want to help other women change their mindsets so they look and feel confident enough to exercise – that means more to me than any kudos I'd get from being stocked in shops.'

CLAIRE'S START-UP TIPS

- 'Don't wait until everything is perfect before launching. It's better to put something out there, see what people think, and learn from there.'
- 'Proactively build a network of people involved in the area you want to work in. Seek out mentors. I've found that successful business women are always willing to be helpful and share advice.'
- 'Identify your values and live by them. Be yourself, as people like authenticity.'