

'MY LIFE IN A DAY'

Zanna Van Dijk fitness blogger

The social media star, PT, author and co-founder of the #GirlGains movement, 25, on inspiring others

I get up at 5.20am, arrive at the gym for 6am to train for an hour (if I don't work out first thing, it doesn't happen), then head home to shower and drink a smoothie made from bananas, blueberries, protein powder, oatmeal and cinnamon, so I'm ready for work by 8am. On a regular day, I'll head out for a morning of meetings, stop for a lunch of salad, quinoa and butternut squash (I follow a plant-based diet), then go home to write a blog post, edit a video for my You Tube channel, create content for a brand, or tackle my inbox, before leaving home for the evening to lead a talk or workout at a #GirlGains event. What started as a hashtag three years ago to bring like-minded women together to educate them about fitness and empower them to look after themselves soon turned into an Instagram account, then hosting events, then signing ambassadors across the world.

'But I also have days of doing photoshoots and filming for big brands such as Fitness First, Nissan and Nivea, who I still can't believe even know I exist! Blogging has presented me with so many amazing opportunities, but being made the first female UK Global Ambassador for Adidas, and getting the chance to design my own shoe collection for miadidas was a massive dream come true.'

BECOMING A STAR

'It wasn't until I was in my second of four years of studying Speech and Language therapy at Sheffield University, that realised I was in poor physical shape (I avoided exercise like the plague at school), and decided to make positive changes to my health, documenting the process on my Instagram account – and later on, via a blog – along the way. By the time I graduated in 2014, my online following was big enough for me to take a risk and move to London to qualify in personal training with a goal of working as a PT and blogger. I combined training clients seven days a week with creating two blog posts and two YouTube videos a week. It was a crazy time and I loved it. But things really took off for me when I was featured in an article called 'How to get InstaFit', for *The Sunday Times Style* magazine in January 2016. They unexpectedly put me on the cover, and a month later,



Breakfast smoothie

Zanna works out first thing

Zanna's night cream

Zanna eats a plant-based diet

I was signed to my agent, and soon had a book deal [Zanna's book *Strong* was published in December 2016 (Headline, £16.99)], building my online following to a point where I could finally go into blogging full-time 18 months ago, although I still train clients one morning a week because I don't feel I can call myself a fitness professional if I'm not actually working in the industry!

'Juggling everything is tough, especially since I started a Facebook group called the Living Consciously Crew – which is all about people living in a more

sustainable and mindful manner – on top of my work to help build the #GirlGains community globally.'

TIME FOR MYSELF

'My main priority is my boyfriend and my parents, and I'm lucky that many of my friends do the same job as me

so we often go to the gym or events together. Factoring in some me-time is a challenge, especially when my job often doesn't feel like work, so I get lost in it easily.

'Cooking dinner such as spicy black beans with sweet potato and vegan Parmesan while listening to music is one of my favourite ways to switch off, and I also meditate for 10-15 minutes daily. I aim to be in bed for 10pm, even on weekends (partying is not on my radar – I'm such a grandma!). Before going to sleep, I slather my face in Nivea Q10+ Vitamin C Night Cream (£10.99 for 40ml; superdrug.com) so my skin is glowing in the morning, before my boyfriend and I both share three things we're grateful for – which is a lovely thing to do every day – before passing out!'

'I was at uni when I realised I was in poor physical shape'

ZANNA'S TOP SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

- Upload content regularly, keeping a consistent theme and message.
- Keep it personal. Share little insights into your own personal opinions and experiences – people like to connect with people.
- Aim for quality over quantity. You don't need to upload content all day every day, but the content you do upload needs to be crisp, clean and high quality.

'Things really took off for me after I was on the cover of *The Sunday Times Style* magazine'

WORDS: Joanna Elsworth PHOTOGRAPHY: Isrock Zanna Van Dijk is working with the Nivea Q10 range to help women supercharge their morning routine