





**I**f you want to achieve anything in life, you've got to work hard for it. That's the message from fitness entrepreneur Krissy Cela. And she should know. As the co-founder of two multi-million pound brands – women's gymwear company Oner Active ([uk.oneractive.com](http://uk.oneractive.com)) and leading female fitness app EvolveYou ([evolveyou.app](http://evolveyou.app)) – Cela has channelled her determination, gritty attitude and resilience into becoming a leader in the fit-tech industry, amassing more than 5.5 million followers across Instagram, YouTube and TikTok. Pretty impressive for a woman who only decided to follow a fitness career after she began posting about her strength training workouts on social media – and attracted interest from women worldwide!

Of course, it would be easy to attribute Cela's success to her good looks, toned physique, media-savvy approach and sheer luck. But that would be a mistake. 'I think hard work prevails over any sort of talent, as you're just willing to put in more,' says Cela, who is no stranger to pulling 16-hour workdays to ensure her customers get everything they need from her products and more. 'For me, it's all about having the ability to just keep going and grind through. I know it's unfashionable to promote overworking, but I do think if you have the ability and the mental capacity to give something your all, you shouldn't stop until you feel like you can't get any more out of it,' she adds, earnestly.

Cela credits her work ethic to her upbringing, following her arrival in England as an immigrant at the age of five. 'I arrived from Albania with my family in the back of a banana lorry,' she explains. 'My parents were very hard working. My mum had three jobs and we didn't have much, so my hard work comes from my mum and her ability to keep going. Education was super important, and my mum always used to say to me "you're not done yet". That's what sparked me to have a bit of grit, more than, say, someone who's had something handed to them.'



**Follow your passion**

Not knowing a word of English, Cela worked hard throughout her childhood and, at the age of 18, began studying law at university

while working as a waitress to pay her way through, and documenting her workouts on Instagram for a mental escape. Once she graduated, however, Cela chose her passion for fitness over a career in law, having built a community of thousands of women who motivated and supported each other online. After gaining her PT qualification, Cela and her business partner set about creating a 'very basic workout PDF, which I'm sure you can probably still find on eBay',

before realising that she wanted to create something less 'one dimensional, and more complex, that would really help women elevate their strength-training journeys, and their lives'.

The Tone & Sculpt app – now called EvolveYou to reflect the app's holistic approach to fitness and its ability to elevate all areas of your life – launched in 2019, and received 250k downloads within the first six months. Three years later, it has an impressive 80,000 subscribers a month, all led by six world-class trainers (including Cela) with different fitness expertise, including HIIT, strength and conditioning, low-impact training, barre and yoga.

'You can't say a product is all about community and then keep yourself at the forefront,' says Cela,

## Find your 'why'

Cela's mission right now is to 'really spell out that EvolveYou is a strength training app for women, because I think

a lot of women are intrigued by strength training – they just don't know how to start doing it. I had no idea what I was doing when I first started lifting weights, and I always keep that in mind whenever I give advice,' she explains. 'I remember the Krissy from seven years ago who walked over to the leg press machine for the first time thinking "wow, this is like a big Transformers machine", but then I moved on and learnt along the way.'

Considering that Cela oozes strength and confidence from every pore, it's hard to imagine there was ever a time in her life when she felt the complete opposite. But that was certainly the case, she tells *WF*. 'My family wasn't into fitness or watching sport, but I found the motivation to enter the gym when I was cheated on. I just felt very insecure and weak at the time, like I wasn't worthy enough to be loved. And then I found love within myself. I thought "you know what, I'm gonna better myself and do this for me". That's why I use the mantra "do this for you above everyone else". Because if you

truly can't be the person you want to be, you can't expect people to be like that around you, you know? That's what instilled the motivation in me to train.'

Finding your 'why' to exercise, says Cela, is essential if you want to achieve your fitness goals going forwards. 'Women have to remember why they are training in the first place. Why are you doing it? Why are you starting something? Fundamentally, you can sit there and say "oh, I really want to lose 10lbs for my wedding day", but really, that's not why you're doing it. You're doing it because you believe losing a bit of weight will make you feel more confident on the day. So, your "why" isn't losing 10lbs, your "why" is to feel your most confident. It's really important to understand what it is you want, and why you are doing what you are doing.'

*'Try to see moving your body as a celebration of what it can do, not as a chore'*



by way of explaining her decision to introduce other trainers. 'For me, it was about bringing in women who share the same concepts and the same mindset I had to help other women, but also bring a different dynamic through their own fitness journeys. That's what makes EvolveYou such a special app, because we have a handful of truly diverse and different trainers in their backgrounds, in their training, and in the way they speak to their communities.'

## CELA'S TIPS FOR SMASHING YOUR GOALS

**'You can't rely on motivation alone; you must rely on discipline. However, building new habits takes time. It's like learning a new language. You're not going to be able to know it all at once, so be patient with yourself.'**

**'Mindset is everything, so try to see moving your body as a celebration of what it can do, rather than another chore to tick off your to-do list.'**

**'Do one thing at a time. It's better to nail your nutrition first and then nail your workouts, or vice versa, rather than trying to do everything at once. Otherwise, you'll feel overwhelmed, which I wouldn't recommend.'**

**Healthy  
body,  
healthy  
mind**

Cela is all too aware of the power that exercise has on mental wellness, and is a big advocate for strength training to develop a strong, confident, empowered mindset. 'Ultimately,' says Cela, 'a healthy body is the one that makes you happy, so I love that we're seeing this huge transition in the fitness world where women are taking up space in the gym and keeping their heads held high'. Cela trains five days a week - she's currently following the EvolveYou Strong Lower Body programme - and wakes up between 5-5.30am to ensure that she fits exercise into her busy schedule.

'My working days start around 9.30am, and can end at 7pm, 10pm, and sometimes even 1am, depending on what I have to get done. So, after waking, I'm straight into the gym for an hour and a half. I take 45 minutes to get ready, and I'll use this time to listen to a podcast or audio book to get my mindset ready, and

then I go to work and it's back-to-back meetings for the rest of the day.'

Sounds intense, but Cela is keen for others to understand that it's a regime she follows only because 'I prioritise myself over everybody else. I intentionally wake up at that time to get my workout in. Of course, it's a pain, and of course I want to stay in bed because, come on, I'm a human being. But I know that if I don't move my body, I'm going to be so grouchy for the rest of the day and feel under pressure to go the gym. So, I'd rather just avoid that feeling by getting up and moving. That way, I can give my whole day to everyone else.'

***'Women are taking up space in the gym and keeping their heads held high'***

**Be consistent**

Her powers of self-discipline aside, Cela understands just how hard it can be to maintain motivation on a fitness journey and has some words of wisdom to share with anyone wanting to take their fitness to a higher level

- but find they lose their willpower along the way. 'When it comes to people who start a fitness challenge and then stop, I always use the analogy of "why do certain men call you back, and certain men don't". To my mind, if a man wants to call you, he would. And if you want to get fit and healthy, you would,' she reasons.

'My point is, how badly do you want it? Don't get me wrong, you have to consider the environments that certain people come from and are in. Many people are living in poverty, to the point where reaping the benefits of health and wellness isn't a top priority. Other women are in very abusive relationships and their partner always brings them down, so they might not have the mental capacity to overcome that. It's our responsibility to educate women and support them, and to better their access to facilities. However, when it comes to the people who do have the facilities and the mental capacity to make a change, but then stop and start, I think we have to be realistic. If you truly want to make that change, you need to be willing to do whatever it takes, commit to yourself and make it happen.'



Photography: Jack Woodhouse





## WHAT'S IN KRISSY'S GYM BAG?



'I haven't found the perfect gym bag yet, but I recently bought this **Patagonia Refugio Daypack 30L (£90; eu.patagonia.com)** and it's really great. I'm always travelling to and from work, and to and from the gym, and duffle bags can be quite draining. Backpacks are definitely the way to go.'

'The side pockets of my gym bag are big enough to hold my **EvolveYou Ultimate Fitness Yoga Mat, £80,** and my **EvolveYou 950ml Everyday Flask, £36.** The mat is absolutely massive, anti-slip and quick



womensfitness.co.uk

drying, so it's perfect for those sweaty workouts. The flask is my favourite water flask to date: it's super lightweight, holds hot and cold liquids, and has a built-in straw so I don't have to take the lid off mid-workout.'

'I always carry some form of snack for when I'm doing big lifts in the gym, such as an **Eat Natural Protein Bar (£14.99 for 20; amazon.co.uk),** to give me a boost of energy during my session, especially if it's longer than an hour, as I get depleted.'

'Supplements wise, I bring along the



**Women's Best BCAA Amino, £27.99,** and the **Women's Best Pre-Workout Booster, £34.99** (uk.womensbest.com) to give me the boost I need. I add the BCAA's to my water flask and put the Pre-Workout in a shaker and down it before training.'

'The **BOSE QuietComfort SE Headphones (£239.95; bose.co.uk)** are by far my favourite headphones. I only need to charge them once every two weeks, plus they're comfortable and easy to wipe clean after a workout - a total must!'

