

'THERE'S NO POINT FOCUSING ON YOUR BODY IF YOUR MIND'S NOT STRONG'

Recently crowned *I'm A Celebrity All Stars* winner and Skechers ambassador **Myleene Klass** tells us why her simple approach to fitness works

Words: Joanna Ebsworth Photography: Karis Kennedy

Words: Joanna Ebsworth, Photography: Karis Kennedy





Feel the fear and do it anyway. That's the mantra by which Myleene Klass lives and it's the same sentiment that helped inspire the multi-talented musician, presenter, fashion mogul and mum-of-three to temporarily swap motherhood and a dizzying number of work projects for a stint on this year's *I'm A Celebrity All Stars* spin-off show in South Africa.

A whopping 17 years after her 2006 foray into the Australian jungle – where she came runner-up to lusted star Matt Willis – Myleene managed to dazzle the British public and her co-stars all over again to be crowned the very first *I'm A Celebrity Legend*.

But this time around, her success had far less to do with taking waterfall showers in her iconic white bikini, and much more to do with her incredible display of mental resilience and fearlessness, along with a determination to face every challenge thrown at her head-on. Which raises the question: just how does she manage to stay so strong?

Rising to life's challenges

'I stay strong because I have a lot of little people relying on me,' says Myleene. 'I've been through a lot of really testing life situations, and those things can either destroy you or – what is it they say? – "Some women are lost in the fire, and some are built by it"? I very much feel the life experiences I've had, and the things I've had to endure and find a way through have given me the tools to say, "Well, what kind of person am I? Do I rise to the challenge of this? Or do I get destroyed by it?"'

'I knew I'd have little eyes watching me in the jungle, and I wanted them to see that when I'm scared, I lean into it. And, if there's something I don't want to do, I will go for it instead of run from it, because life throws so much at you daily and all you can do is lean into it, otherwise it destroys you.'

Myleene is a firm believer in mindset over body mass, and says the fact that she managed to more than hold her own against British sporting legends and Olympic champions only goes to prove that your mind has to be in the right place to then get your body in the right place.

'There's no point in focusing on just the body or having strong arms or strong legs if you're not strong in your mind,' she says. 'Ultimately, it's about every single component working as one. It's about focusing your mind, knowing what you're doing and why you're doing it, and knowing what core values you stand by.'

Family values

Some of Myleene's biggest core values include remaining fit, strong and active for her children,

honouring the body that's seen her through so much, and not comparing her 45-year-old body to the one she had in her 20s.

'The irony of going into the jungle a second time was that I wasn't being compared to anyone else, I was being compared to myself 17 years ago, and that's a highly unusual situation to be in. But I don't feel bad about being compared to myself, because I owe my younger self a huge debt of gratitude for paving the way for me in my 40s,' she says.

'When I had children, my body changed. The first time I didn't even know myself. I've been pregnant seven times, which is a lot on a person's body, and during my last pregnancy, I put on four and a half stones because I'd taken so many hormones. It was awful and I went through so much. But when you push your body to the max, you also see what your body can achieve, so I've got a great deal of respect for this body, and I'm going to be extremely kind to it because it has seen me through some of the toughest days.'

Flexible fitness

Myleene admits to following various structured fitness regimes in the past, but says she employs a very different tactic now, preferring to incorporate activity into her life every day to avoid feelings of guilt if she doesn't manage to complete scheduled workouts.

'I've followed fitness routines in the past but I've found it takes just one child that didn't sleep in the night, or something in my

diary to get moved around, and it all falls apart,' she reasons. 'If you don't learn to be adaptable, you're setting yourself up to fail, so I think it's much better to be a little more flexible and find activities you can do with family or friends, because then you'll enjoy fitness so much more.'

Is it a fair assessment to suggest that fitness is a family affair for Myleene, then? 'That's the only assessment,' she replies emphatically. 'There's no alone time for me, and I think taking myself away from my family to train on my own would sacrifice too much. Therefore, I try to find more inclusive ways to incorporate fitness, otherwise it would never happen!'

'Going into the jungle a second time, I wasn't being compared to anyone else but to myself 17 years ago, which was unusual'

Best foot forward

Myleene officially became an ambassador for Skechers last year but says her family has been 'utterly obsessed' with wearing the brand's shoes for many years, going so far as to credit them with playing a huge supporting role in their active lifestyles.

'I wear Skechers all the time,' she confesses. 'The company offers such a diverse range of lifestyle and performance footwear, and while I do wear them for skipping – because skipping is my thing! – I also wear them with suits and dresses for work. I even wore them running up The Mall from the Coronation to get to my radio show on time for a live report, so I definitely need my footwear to keep up with me! And Skechers shoes really do tick every box when it comes to innovation, comfort and style.'

Myleene's love for Skechers also extends to the wide range of activewear and casual apparel that she says looks great, feels amazing and often coordinates with her footwear. Current favourites include a reversible leopard print zip-up jacket, a selection of oversized sweaters and some lace-trimmed cycling shorts, although she's also partial to

wearing their caps on those days when she hasn't had the time to drag a brush through my hair in the morning'.

'I've got a little boy, and he's a very physical little character,' she laughs. 'He always wants to be outdoors, so it really is a case of just chucking on the Skechers and running to the park, going to the forest, getting on our bikes, or chasing him from the paddling pool to the trampoline in the back garden. Having him in my 40s has literally kept me on my toes!'

Stronger together

Typical physical pursuits for the Klass family include tennis, swimming, cycling, running, roller skating – 'all of us can go, but none of us can stop, so we've learnt to just hurl ourselves onto the grass!' – as well as kitchen discos at the weekend and walking everywhere. And if that wasn't enough, Myleene also remembers her 'sporty fiancé' has just signed up her children to play football at the weekend, before adding, 'honestly, the more I'm talking about it, the more I think we really don't stop!'

Coming back to skipping, Myleene loves to do this at the weekend and did even more in the run-up to entering the jungle

to boost her fitness. 'I don't think any exercise can beat skipping because it's an amazing all-over body workout, it's great for your core, calves and coordination, and just focuses your mind,' she notes.

'We'll skip in the mornings at the weekend, so everyone chooses a song to skip to, and by the time we've finished we've already done a 20-minute workout together and had a lot of fun at the same time.'

'My top tip for sticking to fitness is doing something you enjoy, because if you're laughing, and you're outdoors, and you're connecting with other people, it ticks every box for your mental health, from the endorphins and the dopamine hit to getting some social interaction, feeling the sun on your skin and breathing in the fresh air. And I believe that type of fitness is far easier to stick to consistently.'

And it has to be fun, at the end of the day. 'I think people get intimidated by exercise,' she says, 'because they believe you have to be an Olympian or lift weights or look a certain way, but I went into the jungle and beat people who were a foot taller than me, bigger than me and, supposedly, "stronger" than me, so I think I've proved that my approach to fitness works!'



'We'll skip every weekend for 20 minutes. Everyone chooses a song to skip to so it's a lot of fun!'



'HOW I WEAR MY SKECHERS'

'I wear the **GO WALK Workout Walker shoes (£120-£140)** featuring Skechers' patented Arch Fit insole system for workouts, skipping and running with my second-eldest daughter. They're ultra-lightweight, have a super-responsive **HYPERSURGE** midsole for amazing cushioning and feature a carbon fibre infused plate to put more spring in your step!'



'I love the **Hands-Free Slip-In shoes (£90-£120)** because they're easy to get on and off and have an exclusive Heel Pillow to securely hold your foot in place. They're perfect for travel and getting through security, and I also wear them for the school run, running errands and on jobs where I'm zipping around and need pure comfort.'



'I wear **Street UNO shoes (£120-140)** for work when I want a vibrant pop of colour. They come in a variety of new shades each season and have a modern silhouette, with Air-Cooled Memory Foam insoles and Skech-Air visible airbag midsoles for added comfort.'



'I always get asked about them in the street because they're so eye-catching.'