



‘Exercise is my therapy!’

Vogue Williams tells *Women’s Fitness* about her new Gymondo workout programme and reveals how she’s combining motherhood with her passion for exercise

WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth

If there’s one woman who knows all about ‘the juggle’, it’s Vogue Williams. As a case in point, when we interview the soon-to-be mum of three to discuss her exciting new workout programme with fitness app Gymondo (gymondo.com), it turns out that Williams’ childminder is unexpectedly off due to sickness. But while others would rearrange for a more convenient time, the multitasking entrepreneur and podcast host takes it all in her stride, entertaining her giggling 21-month-old daughter Gigi with ease while answering all our burning questions. What’s her secret to saying sane? The answer is exercise.

‘Exercise definitely helps me cope with my workload because it’s the one

time when I’m on my own and I don’t have to think about anything else,’ she explains. ‘I find working out really relaxing and therapeutic, and I look forward to it every day. I know people who aren’t into fitness might think that’s weird but, even when away, I always follow the same kind of workout schedule. As far as I’m concerned, you never regret a workout.’

Williams’ love of exercise and her commitment to keeping fit is helped by the fact that she uses her workouts to cope with stress and anxiety – a subject she has talked openly about.

‘I’ve always been told to meditate to help with my anxiety, but I’ve never been much of a meditator,’ she confesses. ‘I’ve tried lots of different things and discovered that therapy

Photography: Gymondo

works well for me, as well as exercise. Working out just sets me up for the day and releases endorphins so I feel good about myself. And if I'm feeling really anxious, I go for a run because it settles me. I know lots of other people find exercise helpful, too, but it's important that you find what works for you.'

BUMPS AHEAD

Aside from promoting the mental health benefits of exercise, Williams has been equally as vocal about the benefits of exercising throughout pregnancy. But while she remained super active to the end of her pregnancies with both three-year-old son Theodore and toddler Gigi, she's taking things much slower this time around on doctors' orders, initially swapping her runs for uphill treadmill walks, and now – with less than two months to go – stopping them altogether. But she is still moving.

'I'm not in any way training to the extent I was before I became pregnant, because physically I can't do that,' she explains. 'But it's so nice to have that little breather each day to stretch my body out and feel like I'm doing some kind of movement. My body is changing, and I can't stop those changes, but I like to feel good within myself. Having gone through two births, I do think that giving birth is like running a marathon – you're absolutely exhausted and it's a really tiring day – but I believe that being fit and healthy has helped me to have really good births and quite quick recoveries. And even though I don't have childcare today, I'm still planning on training later when Gigi has a nap!'

JUGGLING ACT

With the birth of her third child fast approaching and plenty of new projects on the go, including hosting duties for a second series of the Boots podcast *Taboo Talk* alongside her other globally successful podcasts, *My Therapist Ghosted Me* and *Spencer & Vogue* (both of which reach an audience of over three million monthly), we wonder how Williams manages to squeeze it all in. Does she have any

advice for other people struggling to fit exercise into their busy lifestyles?

'Before I had kids, I would have given you the answer "everybody has 30 minutes to exercise", but they don't. And if I was a single mum, I'd find it very difficult,' she admits. 'I've got two kids and I don't have time. But I put my workouts in my diary and treat them like they're something as vital as eating. I'll ask my husband Spencer what days he wants to train, and I'll tell him what I want to do, then we juggle it around the kids. Sometimes, if I literally can't get away, I put on a kid's programme and hope I'll get 20 minutes [of exercise] out of it just to slot something into the day. The thing I love about my Gymondo workouts is that they're only 30 minutes long, so you can do them in the comfort and privacy of your home, and you can pause them if the kids wake up from a nap and return to them later if you get the chance.'

'I wanted the Gymondo workouts to reflect how I actually train'

FIT FOR ALL

When we tell Williams how excited we are to try out the workouts from her new Total Body by Vogue Williams fitness programme – a six-week beginners' training plan featuring bodyweight strength and cardio, available exclusively to online training platform Gymondo – we can't help but ask why it's taken her so long to finally do something like this. After all, she certainly kept us entertained during lockdown with her live Instagram workouts.

'I've been desperate to do something like this, and I've been offered quite a few opportunities over the years, especially as my followers have been asking for a complete workout programme for a while now, but I waited because I wanted the workouts to reflect how I actually train,' she explains. 'I'm not an instructor either so it was really important for me to have a qualified trainer working on

the project. Thankfully, Gymondo let me bring my personal trainer, John Belton, on board. I love their app, which offers another 35 training programmes and over 350 workouts alongside mine so you'll never get bored. Plus, I think the app offers really good value for money, which I like because not everyone can afford to go to the gym, and I think fitness should be accessible to everyone.'

FIT FOR ALL

Williams filmed a whopping 10 workouts with Belton over three days, featuring a blend of HIIT, yoga, barre and Pilates to keep things interesting, admitting she was so sore afterwards that she 'hobbled back' to London. 'But that just shows that the workouts are really good,' says Williams. 'I love it when people message me saying things like: "Oh my god, my bum is so sore when I try to sit down on the loo".

But I always say push through it, it won't keep being sore, and, as your body gets used to things, you'll notice that things start to get easier as you get fitter. I'm really proud of the programme and the results you can get doing it.'

So, what kind of results can people expect, we ask?

'I think people will feel great mentally and their fitness levels will really start peaking. You'll notice a difference even after the first week, but if you do follow the plan consistently for six weeks, you're going to feel much better within yourself, and you'll look better, because your body changes when you exercise,' she says. 'That said, I don't think weight loss should necessarily be your goal. Personally, I think that your goal should be to feel mentally and physically better and fitter, and if you feel better in your clothes as well then that's a bonus. I honestly believe that exercise can empower anyone because taking control of your mental health and feeling your best is empowering. That's why I love to see someone who doesn't train get into fitness and start to enjoy it. If you're not on the exercise train, get on it, I say. It will make you feel really good.'

VOGUE WILLIAMS' FULL-BODY CIRCUIT

Try Vogue's full-body circuit, featuring seven of her favourite moves to kick your booty into high gear at home or in the gym. Vogue prefers to train using just her bodyweight, so you don't need any fancy equipment - just a mat and a bit of motivation! To do it, perform each exercise for 30 seconds for a total of four rounds, with little to no rest between moves. If needed, rest for 30 to 60 seconds between rounds.

1

SKATERS

Making sure you have enough room to jump side-to-side, stand with your weight on your right foot and your right knee bent.

Next, lift your left leg off the floor behind you, then bound to your left by pushing off with your right leg. Land on your left foot, lifting your right leg off the floor behind you. Continue

hopping back and forth. If needed, touch your back foot on the floor behind you for balance.



2

PLANK

Lying on your front with your legs straight out behind, place your forearms on the floor in front of you, lifting your head and chest slightly off the ground and making sure your elbows are directly underneath your shoulders. Tuck your toes under, engage your abs and lift your hips off the floor. Focus on keeping your abs and glutes squeezed hard throughout so that your body forms a straight line from shoulders to knees. Hold for 30 seconds.





3

CURTSY LUNGE

Standing with your feet hip-width apart with your core braced and hands clasped together at chest height, step your right leg diagonally behind your left leg while bending both your knees to 90°. Return to the start position then repeat on the other side, leading with your left leg and crossing it behind your right leg. Return to standing and continue alternating.

4

RUSSIAN TWISTS

Clasping your hands together or holding a dumbbell in both hands, sit on the ground with your knees bent and heels on the floor. Lean slightly back to create a V-shape, then engage the core and raise both legs off the floor so your calves are parallel to the ground. Pull your navel to your spine and twist slowly to the right. Next, slowly return to centre and keep rotating to the left.



5 LUNGE TO ROW

Stand tall with your feet hip-width apart and your hands hanging loose in front of your thighs. Take a large step forward with your right foot, lowering your body until both knees are bent about 90°, and raise your hands up to chest height, keeping your elbows high and out to the side. Pause, and then lower your hands and step backwards, pushing off your right foot to return to the starting position. Repeat on the other side.



6 SIT-UPS

Sit on the floor and bend your knees, with your heels on the floor. Lie fully back and bring the tips of your fingers to your temples. Without pulling on your head, and keeping some space between your chin and chest, exhale and use your core to peel your upper body off the floor. When you reach the top of the sit-up position, slowly exhale as you lower back to the ground with control.

7 HIGH KNEES

Standing with your feet hip-width apart, raise your left knee to your chest (or hip). Lower your left foot, then switch to raise your right knee to your chest (or hip). Continue the movement, alternating legs and moving at a jogging or sprinting pace.

