

‘HOW I GOT MY BEST RESULTS, EVER!’

The fitness queen, **Stef Williams**,
tells us how she built her strongest,
healthiest body to date

WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth





Take our word for it, Stef Williams is one very busy lady. When the fitness entrepreneur formerly known as Stef Fit isn't keeping her 1.6 million Instagram followers and 787.5 TikTok fans entertained with her style, beauty and fitness tutorials, you'll find her filming workouts and streaming live classes for her hugely successful fitness and lifestyle app WeGLOW (weglow.app), and capitalising on her passion for fashion with her new luxury activewear brand, SEFI (thisissefi.com), the first two drops of which both managed to sell out in under 24 hours!

Not one to rest on her laurels, it turns out Williams has a third SEFI drop on the way when we talk to her to find out how she manages to stay in such amazing shape and run a fitness empire at the same time (it will probably already be sold out by the time you read this). And she's continuing to stay busy for the foreseeable future by overseeing the creation of new workout content for her app, after flying in two new fitness instructors from America – 'I can't give everyone everything, and



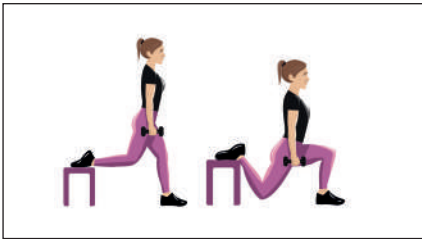
I like to give people new faces. There's power in numbers' – which begs the question: how does she manage to fit it all in? And stay fit? And, importantly, stay sane? Read on to find out.

What is your fitness approach?

'My approach to fitness now is very different compared to when I first started my Stef Fit Instagram channel at 23. Initially, I had a lot of fun creating fitness content for social media, and it helped me find my love for fitness

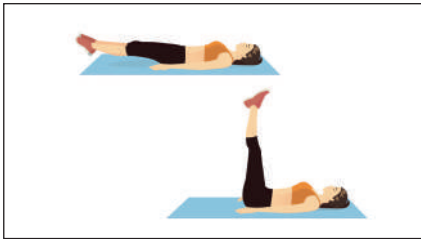
again after I stopped playing hockey for Wales at 18. But after a while, the pressure of everyone wanting so much from me and needing to go to the gym to film videos became immense. Around 2018, I was feeling extremely tired, which wasn't helped by my endometriosis, and I experienced my biggest dip in terms of my Instagram account and my mental health. Once I had laparoscopy surgery, I decided to start actually looking after myself and prioritising me instead. When I moved

'MY FAVOURITE FITNESS MOVES'



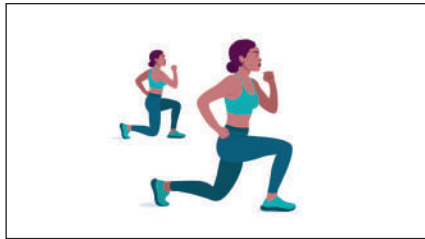
Bulgarian split squat

'You might think I'm a nutter but I love Bulgarian split squats. They're in all my guides, and people probably think, "Oh, here she goes again". But they make me feel really strong. I do a lot of single-leg exercises because they're so good for your balance, posture and core.'



Double-leg raises

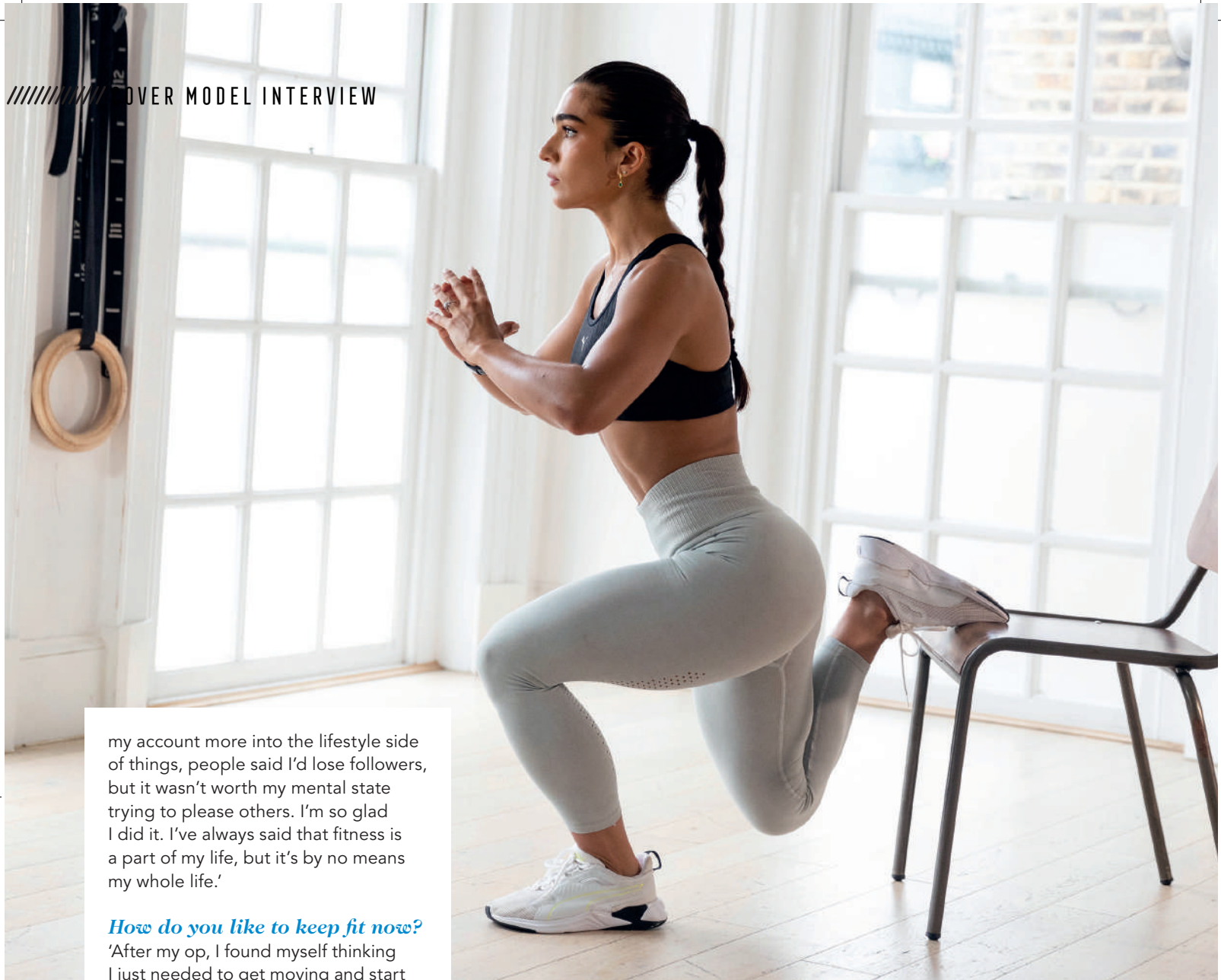
'Double-leg raises are an amazing core exercise that are also great for the quads. I often do them elevated on a bench for an extra challenge because you can lower your legs down a lot further. I love the all-round burn with this move.'



Walking lunges

'Walking lunges are hard because they test your strength, balance and agility, but I like to get competitive with myself (maybe it's my sporting background). I usually do 10, then turn around and do another 10 back to the start, super-setting them with something like jumping lunges for two or three rounds in total.'

‘FITNESS IS A PART OF MY LIFE, BUT IT’S BY NO MEANS MY WHOLE LIFE.’



my account more into the lifestyle side of things, people said I'd lose followers, but it wasn't worth my mental state trying to please others. I'm so glad I did it. I've always said that fitness is a part of my life, but it's by no means my whole life.'

How do you like to keep fit now?

'After my op, I found myself thinking I just needed to get moving and start doing things with joy to move more consistently. I started walking loads, then jogging, and doing shorter bodyweight workouts, which I absolutely love. With my schedule, it's very much about seeing what I can fit in while enjoying it, too. When I started moving my body this way, that's when I started seeing the best results, because I was more consistent and under less pressure, rather than saying, "Right, I'm training five days a week and doing legs this day and upper body that day". Now, I very much work my entire body two or three times a week, doing 20-minute strength, HIIT and mobility workouts from my WeGLOW app, although I do love to train my legs a bit more, too. I never decided I wanted abs, but I think I exercise in a more effective way now, moving in a way

I enjoy, and my body has reacted in a positive way. Obviously, I still do ab workouts, circuits and set challenges on the app, because they're fun and everyone asks for them, but I'd never say to anyone, "Do this and you'll get this". It's more, "Move like this and you'll be your best version".

How do you juggle keeping fit with a busy career?

'It's very important to me to have a schedule, and how I set myself up for the day is crucial to how the rest of my day falls. That includes food. I might not be able to do a workout one day, but if my nutrition is on point and I'm able to walk to a meeting, then that's fine. Time blocking is crucial to me, as is the versatility of my workouts and

having the ability to do something from my front room. I also sometimes go to the gym with my husband first thing in the morning. He's more of a morning person than me and he'll occasionally trick me out of bed by lying about the time. But I don't mind; it definitely helps to be around like-minded people.'

How important is your diet to staying in shape?

'I think exercise and good nutrition go hand in hand. For me, it's all about eating lots of wholesome wholefoods to keep me going because I exercise a lot and am always moving here, there and everywhere. I think some people assume I don't eat much or that I only eat salad, but my mum always cooked healthy homemade meals for me and

'I NEEDED TO GET MOVING AND START DOING THINGS WITH JOY'

the day. I also make little homemade protein bars in bulk so I can grab them anytime, but I prefer to take 10 minutes out of my day to sit down and eat. Don't get me wrong, if I'm having a busy day, I might have to grab a sandwich after a workout and eat it on-the-go just to get some food in me. But when I'm in the office, I take time out to eat. I like to remember that I've eaten something, rather than finishing a phone call and realising I've eaten my lunch without noticing or enjoying it!

Did having endometriosis affect your nutrition?

'My endometriosis symptoms included crippling pains that would stop me in my tracks, fatigue, horrific skin and depression. As a result of feeling so very low, I stopped training as much and started grabbing super-sugary, processed foods. Sugar is so bad for endometriosis, but once you're in that mindset, it can be super hard to get out of. However, once I had my endo operation, I decided I needed to take my health more seriously. Things had got to a point where I had to ask myself if my tiredness was down to endometriosis or because I'd stopped working out and started eating loads of sugar. I had to be very real and brutal with myself because I realised I wasn't helping myself in that situation.'

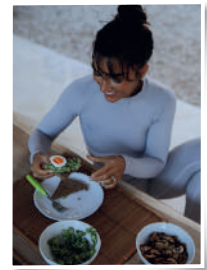
What changes did you make to your diet as a result?

'After my op, my doctor advised me to avoid meats in general, because there can be so many hormones pumped into them. I haven't had any red meat in maybe eight years. I eat chicken from time to time but I eat a lot more fish and beans now to get my protein in. I don't have dairy anymore, and I stay away from processed foods and sugars. Although, I'll obviously have a little chocolate here and there. If I want something, I'll have it, because the more I restrict something in my head, the more I'll want it. I also drink loads and loads of water (I stopped drinking alcohol for a while because it didn't help things). Yes, six weeks after the operation I was still in pain and feeling

bloated and uncomfortable, but I started to feel so much better over time. I think it was a combination of movement and food. I know when I exercise and eat well, I'm at my most focused and most productive. That's when I feel really good in myself.'

'WHAT I EAT IN A DAY'

Good nutrition plays a key role in keeping Williams in shape. Here's how she stays fuelled...



MORNING

6.30am

Hot water with lemon

6:31am

Matcha with almond milk

7.00am

A handful of cashews before the gym and a big bottle of water*

08:00am

Peanut Butter Overnight Oats (WeGLOW recipe)

08:10am

Apple

10:00am

Oat milk flat white (homemade or shop bought) with an On-The-Go Protein Bar (WeGLOW recipe)

11:30am

Pear



AFTERNOON

13:00

Sweet potato with a can of tuna, mayo, sweetcorn, and jalapeños (baked with toppings on top)

15:00

Another apple or pear and a can of Diet Coke



EVENING

19:00

Fillet of fish with roasted vegetables

20:30

One crumpet with a bit of Flora (and sometimes strawberry jam for extra sweetness) with a Fresh Mint & Lemon Tea (our WeGLOW recipe also adds a touch of maple syrup - it completely makes it!)



my family, my husband and I are real foodies. I love sandwiches, baked potatoes and beans on toast – some of my colleagues say I eat like a student! But I do think there's a lot of confusion surrounding healthy eating these days. The key is to figure out what works for you, and that comes with time, not from copying other people's diets.'

What sort of foods work for you?

'When I first got into fitness, I felt like I had to get loads of protein in by drinking protein shakes. But that didn't work for me – I like to eat my food! I prefer to get all my nutrients from my meals, so I like food in its natural form and not super processed. I eat three meals a day, but I'm also a snacker and I constantly graze on fruit throughout

*I drink lots of water throughout the day, and also love mixing blackcurrant squash with sparkling water.'