

WE'RE TALKING TO...

Beth Tweddle MBE

Britain's greatest ever female gymnast, 32, talks about life after competing

1. HOW DO YOU STAY FIT AND HEALTHY?

'I just do your everyday workouts at the gym, from swimming to getting on the cross-trainer to conditioning my abs. I try to mix things up as I get bored if I follow the same regime week in, week out. I try not to tell myself I have to train three, four or five times a week, as I've done that all my life. It's nice to have more freedom.

Exercise is a bit of fun now, and it's important that I combine it with seeing friends. My best friend who I train with recently had a baby, so I've been a bit slack lately!



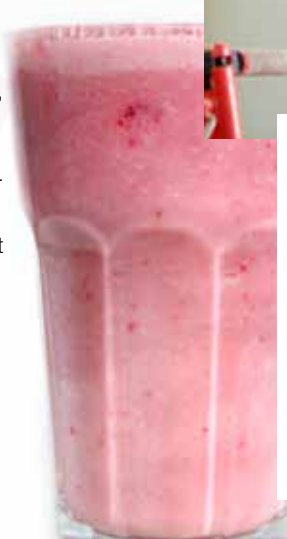
2. WAS IT HARD TO ADJUST TO 'NORMAL' LIFE AFTER RETIRING?

'Gymnastics has always been my passion, and it still is – I've just found ways to link my work to the sport. I commentate on gymnastics for the BBC three or four times a year, including this year's Commonwealth Games, which I love as I keep my hand in at the elite level. But my main focus is running my company, Total Gymnastics (totalgymnastics.co.uk), which helps 3,000 children engage in gymnastics every week. They also build determination, discipline and resilience – skills I didn't realise were so useful to me until after I retired, and have helped me in all sorts of situations.'



3. WHAT'S IN YOUR GYM BAG?

'My gym bag is always packed ready with a towel, trainers, crop top, vest top, leggings and wash bag so I can go to the gym at the drop of a hat. And I have three wash bags – one for travel, one for the gym and one for home – as I can't be bothered to pack and repack. I'm not a girly girl so I'm not loyal to any beauty products. I just use up what people have bought me for Christmas! I love Lululemon, MyProtein and Sweaty Betty for workout kit. Half the battle is finding leggings that won't go see-through or ride down your bum – not very classy!'



WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth PHOTOGRAPHY: xx

4. WHAT'S YOUR BODY-CONFIDENCE PHILOSOPHY?

'As a junior gymnast, I was always the tallest in the group, and probably the more mature when it came to body development, so I was quite self-conscious. But my coach taught me very early on to be proud of who I was, and I've always had to keep her words in my head, even now. My body has changed a lot since I've retired. I'm not as toned, but that's natural because I'm no longer training 30 hours a week, and I've learned to accept it.'



5. ARE YOU ALWAYS LOOKING FOR THE NEXT CHALLENGE?

'I set so many challenges when I was younger, I now try to live more for the day. My biggest goal is to give every child in the UK the opportunity to have a go at gymnastics. Currently, my camps are North West-based, but my dream is to take them around the country – there are so many kids on waiting lists right now who don't engage with gymnastics but would love to.'