
MY LIFE IN HEALTH

'WE CAN BE HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER WHEN WE STRESS LESS'

TV personality, author and podcast host Kate Ferdinand, 33, talks to Jo Ebsworth about exercising for good mental wellbeing, being more real on social media, and being kinder to herself.

This might sound funny, but I don't know why I started suffering from anxiety.

These days, there's a label for everything, but back when I was in school, I just knew I felt worried a lot of the time. From a young age, I overthought everything and always felt a bit different, but I don't think there was a specific reason for it. But as a teenager, I started going to the gym with my mum first thing in the morning so I could get a lift to school instead of taking the train. After going regularly for a few weeks, I started to enjoy it and realised it helped me feel better. That was 20 years ago, and exercise has been a constant in my life ever since.

Maintaining a routine is usually very important to me. But more recently, I feel like I've really changed. I wouldn't want anyone clinging on to what I say about my workouts because I'm constantly adjusting what works for me from month to month, and I think it's okay not stick to doing the

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same thing all the time – I don't want to put that much pressure on myself! Back in the summer, my goal was to try and grow my glutes. So, if you'd asked me about my training then, I would have told you I was exercising five days a week, but I soon realised that level of training was too much for me and way harder than I anticipated. Naturally, I've changed my routine since then, and I'm now trying to fit in two Pilates sessions and two gym sessions a week. I'm still slogging away at my goal, but it's a gradual process because I'm at the age now where I don't want quick fixes. I just want to have a nice, healthy, strong body that lets me do all the things I want to do.

I think not being so hard on myself is something that comes with age. And with having lots of children too, I suppose! I have children who need to go to school and get to after-school clubs. So, if I don't get my exercise done very early in the morning, it's



WORDS: JOANNA EBSWORTH. IMAGES: F&F AT TESCO.

Kate wears F&F Reflective Top, £14, and Reflective Black Legging, £19.50.

not going to happen. Because life gets in the way, and if the children are sick or the baby's been up all night, it isn't always realistic to try to fit in a workout. These days, I try to feel more relaxed about exercise and remember that if I have a day off from it, it's not the end of the world.

I've got a family of five children, and family will always come first. I want to make it clear that what you see on social media isn't the full picture. I naturally tend to post videos of me when I'm feeling good about myself and when I'm training in the gym, but I've become really conscious about the fact that's not a realistic representation of my life – I don't want people to think I've always got my s**t together when I haven't! Sometimes, I can be in the gym and feeling like Wonder Woman, but then life can humble me really quickly and I have to put my goals on hold. That's why recently I've tried to be a bit more open and honest on social media and tell people when I've relaxed my routine. Because life throws up different challenges, and you've got to be realistic about what you can and can't achieve when you've got kids and a job.

The one message I would really like to get across is that we can do it all. But that doesn't mean we have to do it all every single day. If you can make time to exercise or get outside and move a few days a week to help you feel good, that's enough. Because when you set a really high bar for yourself, you could end up feeling bad if you don't reach it. I think walking is so underrated as a tool for helping your mental health, and I've personally noticed the change from trying to get outside more for some fresh air. Walking daily can make all the difference, and it's really important to me that we do lots of walking together as a family at the weekend. When there's a day I can't train as planned, I'll also try to walk more or take the stairs instead of the escalator. Ultimately, it's about making regular activity a part of my lifestyle rather than turning it into something that adds another mental strain.

A few years ago, it felt like if you didn't go to the gym, you weren't serious about fitness. But there's so many ways to stay active, and I think my latest range for F&F really reflects that. My first three collections sold out, and I'm so excited about

this fourth collection because it is bigger, better, and more inclusive than ever. We've got all your workout and casual needs covered, from reflective running gear and supportive gym kit to cosy tracksuits you can wear for walking and a lovely set for yoga and Pilates that's my favourite, because you can also wear it around the house on a Sunday. So, there really is something for everyone, however you choose to move.

It's very important to me that my F&F range is accessible because fitness is for all. Everything is available in sizes 6-22 because we're all different shapes and sizes, and prices start from £10 so I hope everyone can pick something up and feel comfortable and seen. I honestly think putting on a stylish, flattering outfit does something to the brain and can help you feel more confident and motivated, especially in January when you might be feeling a little bit nervous about starting a new routine or going to the gym. And it helps that the fabrics are so soft and fit so well!

I think I look at fitness differently since becoming a mum. Before, when I was younger, I suppose I trained so my body looked good. Whereas now, I obviously still want to look good – and that is still one reason why I work out – but I mainly exercise now for health and longevity. I want to be here a long time for my children, and I also think I'm going to be a really young nan because I'm quite a young step-mum. So, when my step-children have kids, I might be a nanny at 45. Nanny Kate! I reckon I'm always going to have my hands full, but I like it that way.

I do think I eat healthily, but I'm not afraid to have a bit of chocolate. I love Dairy Milk, I just don't have it every single day, so it's everything in moderation. That said, I recently took an intolerance test and it turns out I'm intolerant to egg, dairy and wheat, which makes sense because I get a really bloated, sore belly whenever I eat bread. I'll probably only have it as a treat when I eat out now because I can't say no to a bread basket!

I'm not someone who's going to starve themselves. I love food, and I eat three good meals a day. My plate is always well balanced with carbs, veg and protein, and



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Kate wears F&F Navy Sweater, £19.50, and Ribbed Navy Legging, £18.

'I think my secret to happiness is not taking things too seriously... and surrounding myself with people who have my best intentions at heart'



Kate wears F&F Cropped Hoodie, £25, and Relaxed Jogger, £19.50.

I double up on my protein sometimes to fuel my workouts. People might look at me and think I'm weird because I'm eating two chicken breasts, but it helps to keep me feeling full, and I like to have more helpings of the healthy things. I also take lots of vitamins with my breakfast, lunch and dinner for general health and wellbeing, as well as for tackling brain fog.

In recent years, I've become quite self-conscious about my skin. I do get dark spots on my face sometimes, which I think, in part, is down to genetics, but I also think it's hard not to compare yourself to a younger version of you. But I'm very religious now with using sun protection. I use an SPF from La Roche-Posay on my face all year round and it's been a game changer because it really stays, plus I've also got a spray mist as well, which I use over my make-up if the sun's out. I haven't put my face in the sun for seven years, and if you see me with no make-up on, I'm like a ghost – my body's brown and I've got a powder-white face, but I'm hoping that will serve me well in years to come when I've avoided sun damage such as increased wrinkles and dark spots.

Last year was a good year for me generally. My health might not have been tip-top all the time, but I'm more understanding of myself and haven't put so much pressure on myself. I feel as though you can be healthier and happier when you stress less about everything. But I've got to a place where I'm feeling good and I'm excited for 2025. Don't get me wrong, we all have stuff going on, but I feel much more content now. I have a better relationship with myself, and that's a good place to be.

I hate doing New Year's resolutions because I never stick to them. But what I would like to do this year is maybe try some meditation. I've got a busy life and I'm always on the go so my mind ticks away quite a lot of the time. I find it especially difficult to quiet my mind in the evenings, so I think meditation could help to improve my overall health. I think my secret to happiness is maybe not taking things too seriously, surrounding myself with people I know really love me and have my best intentions at heart, and cutting out the rest of the noise.

The F&F ACTIVE collection, curated by Kate Ferdinand, can be found at selected F&F Tesco stores. Available in sizes 6-22, starting from £10.