

It's never too late to...

challenge yourself

Aged 59, retired fashion forecaster Jani Rad resolved to try 60 new things before 60. Since then, she's done everything from zip lining over land to stripping off on a beach...

In the 12 months leading up to my 60th birthday, I flew a plane, held a tarantula and hula-hooped every day for a month. After losing my husband in 2017 I found I was scared of everything, even small things like getting on public transport in London, where I live. We married when I was quite young and had no children, so when he died suddenly at 64 my life changed beyond all recognition.

I felt like I'd lost myself. My friends suggested I take on challenges that'd push me out of my comfort zone, and it escalated from there. Some were bucket-list 'to-dos' that would make anyone nervous; others more personally daunting, like wearing mismatched underwear. There was just one rule: all had to be things I'd not done before.

My first challenge was a huge struggle for a neat freak like me: to leave my house without making the bed. I've since driven a combine harvester, stripped off at a nudist beach, and rode a zip line. I've pole-danced, harvested honey from bees, and darted round London on the back of a motorbike. For the finale – a week before my birthday on 4 October – I sky-dived over Salisbury. Intense at first, hurtling at 120mph, within a minute I was floating above the clouds in surreal, calming silence. Would I do it again? Probably not.

I even went on a Tinder date. I found a French gentleman on the app and met him at a bar. It was happy hour, so we got free chicken wings with our drinks. As I only drank water, I was a cheap date! I later flew to Geneva for lunch with him. We're still in touch as friends.

Wherever possible, I involved people who are important in my life. I visited my friend's farm and sheared a sheep; I replaced my nephew as a food delivery driver. Another friend relocated to the Middle East, gifted me a six-foot-tall plant and challenged me to keep it alive. It was going well until I moved it outside.

There have been a few that didn't work out, so I had to replace them. Someone dared me to eat baked beans and sausages out of a tin, which I nearly failed at. I'd rather fly a plane, even though that

'Someone dared me to eat baked beans and sausages out of a tin, which I nearly failed at. I'd rather fly a plane'



Action woman
Sky-diving, on a motorbike and riding bareback. Bottom left, axe-throwing



involved sweaty palms and heart palpitations. There's also some I enjoyed so much that I've kept them up, such as boxing, and volunteering at a local food bank.

I've come so far, confronting multiple fears, like lifts (I shot up 50 storeys) and horses (I rode bareback in the ocean). It's stopped me overthinking things before I attempt them. Finding my feet living alone hasn't been easy, but my confidence has swelled over the year. I've treasured the opportunity to bond with friends and family who helped me complete the list. The process has

changed my life. I plan to keep pushing myself and encourage others to do the same. No matter how experienced you are, there are always new things to discover.



BUCKET LIST HIGHLIGHTS

- * Eat jellied eels
- * Post a Tweet
- * Attend a life drawing class
- * Try axe throwing
- * Paint something worthy of wall space in my home
- * Walk Tower Bridge's glass floor walkway
- * Try Wim Hof ice water swimming
- * Attend a Bollywood dance class
- * Get published
- * Try industrial welding

AS TOLD TO REBECCA NORRIS

