

RECORD BREAKER:

REAL LIFE

‘I love being 7ft – though I need six seats on a plane!’

The world’s tallest woman, Rumeysa Gelgi, is reaching new heights

Getting attention everywhere she goes isn’t new for Rumeysa Gelgi – as she holds the accolade of being the world’s tallest woman.

Rumeysa, who lives in Turkey, was first crowned the world’s tallest teenager in 2014 when she measured in at a staggering 7ft 0.09in. Now 28, in total she’s the proud owner of eight world records, including longest back, finger, hands and widest hand span, all for a female.

STATUESQUE

Thanks to her statuesque height, she’s appeared on TV shows across the globe, and has now been able to travel by airplane – something she was previously unable to do. Rumeysa, whose height is attributed to a rare condition called Weaver syndrome, is now championing those with disabilities. She says, ‘I hope to make a difference across the world.’

Rumeysa recalls how she’d always been taller than her peers and siblings, even from birth. She says, ‘My parents noticed I was bigger than the other

babies, as I weighed 13lbs and was 59cm long.’ After a series of tests, she was diagnosed with Weaver syndrome at four months old – a rare genetic disorder that caused excessive postnatal growth and skeletal issues. Rumeysa says, ‘It was a randomly occurring condition, no one else in my family had it.’

Weaver’s syndrome has also caused Rumeysa to have other health complications, including a hole in her heart, umbilical hernia and scoliosis, which needed multiple operations.

As Rumeysa got older, she towered above her peers and by the time she was six years old, she was 5ft 6 tall, which meant getting a lot of stares from strangers in the street. Rumeysa, who works as a web developer and advocate speaker, says, ‘I distinctly remember strangers in the supermarket looking me up and down, but my mum told me to pay no attention. While I had a supportive family, I still felt self-conscious at times.’

Due to her condition, Rumeysa was home-schooled and all her clothes had to be made by a custom tailor, her shoes by an



Rumeysa met the world’s shortest woman, Jyoti Amge, last year at a Guinness World Records event

orthopaedic expert and even her bed was custom-made.

In 2014, Rumeysa was watching TV when she saw a story about the world’s tallest teenager. She says, ‘I noticed she was actually shorter than me, so I got in touch with the Guinness World Records to see if I could go for the record myself.’

THRILLED

An adjudicator came to Rumeysa’s home and had to stand on a chair to measure her. She says, ‘When she told me I was officially the world’s tallest female teenager, I was thrilled! I was measured three times just to make sure, and then I was presented with a certificate in front of my family.’

‘To be awarded that at such a young age was an amazing achievement. I’d always been shy and struggled to make friends. But becoming a part of the Guinness World Records family opened up a whole new

world for me.’ Rumeysa says a personal highlight was when she met Jyoti Amge in November 2024 – the world’s shortest living woman. Jyoti, who lives in India, has achondroplasia, a form of dwarfism and stands at just over two foot tall. Rumeysa says, ‘As she looked up at me and I towered over her, we couldn’t help but laugh. It was difficult for us to make eye contact at times due to our height difference, but meeting her was so amazing. We had things in common – we both love make-up, self-care and doing our nails.’

Rumeysa has since gone on to star in TV shows across the world, which has opened up new opportunities for her, such as being able to fly on a plane for the first time. Rumeysa, who often relies on a wheelchair or walker to get around, boarded a specially-adapted flight from Istanbul to San Francisco. She says, ‘Due to my spinal curvature, joint problems and muscle issues, I cannot sit up for longer than



Rumeysa loves her height despite also facing struggles

‘I CANNOT SIT UP FOR LONGER THAN TWO HOURS AT ONCE’

She has eight Guinness World Records in total



Meeting Jyoti, the world’s smallest woman

two hours at once, so the airline installed a stretcher over six seats and three rows so I could fly. I was the first person to use a stretcher as a regular passenger. It was a fully booked commercial flight, so there were a lot of curious people on board, but I had an incredible time!’

PROUD

Now, Rumeysa dedicates her time to raising awareness of rare disabilities. She says, ‘My condition has made me who I am and, for that, I’m always proud. I believe that a negative thing can often be turned into a positive one. I always say to people who are struggling with being different that you should be aware of your potential. You’re unique – it’s your uniqueness that makes you special.’

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On a recent flight