

Giving back to carers: Denise Yeats

From business loss caused by Covid to retraining as a sports coach for menopausal women, Denise Yeats is giving back to carers with a 24-hour solo swim and cycle challenge for Carers UK.

Until March 2020, Denise Yeats had a successful events company with exhibitions and conferences planned for clients that included the WWF and Parkinson's UK.

When the pandemic hit, and events were cancelled, Denise found that, as her company was a limited one, she wasn't entitled to financial assistance from the government.

To survive financially, Denise drew on savings. To survive mentally as her livelihood disappeared, the 54-year-old endurance athlete who lives in Cricklewood, north London cycled around Regent's Park, did open water swimming at Teddington and the Serpentine, and ran.

As a woman going through the early stages of menopause, she noticed the need to adapt how she trained, and the combination of the loss of events business and the menopause led Denise to re-evaluate and reinvent her work.

She retrained as a sports coach and now trains women who are going through the menopause. She is also an IRONMAN Certified Coach.

Denise said, "2020 was a really tough year, so with no business coming in I volunteered locally and walked a neighbour's dog, but it was being able to go out on my bike and do open water swimming that kept me strong."

"The pandemic was a scary time professionally and financially, but good has come from it with a new focus and business. The menopause meant I had to refine the way that I train as established methods no longer worked and injuries became more common. Then, when a friend asked me to train her, initially I was unsure, but she encouraged me to gain the qualifications and set up as a coach.



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“As women going through the menopause it’s important to remember that our bodies are changing and we’re starting to lose power. It’s not our endurance, that’s always there, more so in women than men. We need to tune up the power side of things. It’s important not to give up and let the menopause beat you, but to adapt how you train.”

Denise devised a 24-hour solo swim and cycle (aquabike) endurance challenge that she will undertake in June in Greater London to raise funds for Carers UK. What started in 2000 as a dare with a friend to run the London Marathon has since led Aberdeen-born Denise to compete in marathons, triathlons, and a half IRONMAN.



There was also an 800-mile three-week self-supported cycle challenge through the Andes from Argentina to Chile, and many open water swimming events in Scotland.

Speaking of the 24-hour solo challenge for Carers UK, Denise commented,

“After years spent creating challenge events for charities, I devised the 24-hour solo aquabike event to give something back to Carers UK. The menopause sports coaching is going well, and thanks to Carers UK I still have an events company, although diminished, as in 2021 the charity hired me to organise their conferences. These were done virtually using new technology that brought together members of the charity and speakers from around the country.

“The conferences for Carers UK may have saved me financially and helped to keep my events business going, but it was more than that. Speaking with the people the charity supports, the carers, had a massive impact, and that’s why



I’ll do a sponsored 24-hour aquabike for the charity.

“Doing the aquabike on my own for 24 hours will be an unrelenting physical and mental challenge, but after 24 hours, it’s finished. Being a carer doesn’t finish after 24 hours and without support it can be lonely and scary. There are no medals and often very little recognition for the important role that carers have in families and in society.

Having met so many people during the virtual conferences, their love for the person they care for and their selflessness, strength and kindness were so obvious. Thankfully there are people with their strength and courage to care, and organisations like Carers UK to help these remarkable individuals.”

You can check out Denise's JustGiving page here:
[justgiving.com/fundraising/denise-yeats](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/denise-yeats)