

## Run In England – Laura’s Case Study

**“I never would have thought about starting running a year and a half ago!”**



In March 2009 Laura weighed 23½ stone, this is her story of how Run In England has helped give her a new lease of life.

Laura first talks about how it all started: **“I went to my local Doctor's surgery for a new patient medical and they told me about a weight management scheme they were running. My weight loss nurse was fab and really encouraging. I started to lose weight from managing what I ate and I eventually built up the courage to join a gym. To start with I could manage about 20 minutes of walking/cycling before I felt like I was going to pass out! I stuck with it and went from strength to strength but eventually I started to get bored and feel like I wasn't achieving.”** Laura needed something different to get her motivated; this is when she came across Run In England.

Laura first saw our running poster at her local gym; she mulled over it for weeks before plucking up the courage to do something about it. Although at first Laura **“was sceptical and VERY nervous”**, she sent an email to the local Run In England leader voicing her concerns over her running ability, as she had not run since school and was still **“overweight”**. She states, **“The response I got could not have been more encouraging. She called me up and explained that beginners really did mean beginners.”** This put Laura’s mind at ease and she attended her first session on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010. Laura managed to jog for a minute with a 2-3 minute gap between each burst. Despite being tired and sore, Laura was determined to get into running!

Laura now attends running group 3 times a week, she commented on how easy it was to find a session to suit your availability and needs, as Wirral now

have 10 sessions throughout the week. Laura entered into the Birkenhead Park - Race For Life, alongside other members of our Wirral running groups as extra motivation to keep running. As weeks went by Laura was improving more and more and we began to concentrate on her running style as well as running for longer periods of time.

On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, prior to the start of the Race For Life, the running leaders and members met up to offer words of encouragement and support. Laura managed to run for 3k without stopping. **“I was so pleased with how my first race had gone, the atmosphere was great and running with one of the leaders from the club and some of the other club members really spurred me on.”** Spirits were high, as the group had come along way since their first session. For a majority of them running was no longer a chore but a hobby. They have officially caught the running bug! But Laura wasn't prepared to stop here; she was already looking ahead to her next challenge...

We advertised the Hoylake 10k to our West Kirby Concourse group, which was taking place on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September. 12 members of Run In England signed up for the run, including Laura! The group asked if the leaders would support them on the day, which we were more than happy to do. We arranged to meet close to the starting point, everyone was nervous but looking forward to the challenge. No more than Laura who was eager to get going, taking part in a warm up with the rest of the Run In England group. Laura reflects back on the run **“Just over 4 months since starting running I have completed my first 10k race, and I ran the whole thing! I ran with another club member who was doing her first 10k too and we both finished around the same time. Our leader stuck with us the whole way encouraging us. I couldn't have done it without their support and encouragement.”**

As Laura ran the last 100 metres, our other runners were waiting to clap and cheer her on, as well as her family who has been their from the start. Other members of Run In England, who had not felt ready to run 10k had come along to support the group and in particular Laura who has been an inspiration to them all. This reinforced the ethos of our running group. Laura stated that coming over the finish line and seeing the support was **“the best feeling in the world!”**



**“I still can't quite believe it, me, running, a 10k organised race!”**

**“I can honestly say I would never have done anything like this if I was left to my own devices. The encouragement and support you get from the group is amazing. It doesn't matter about ability, everyone is always cheering each other on and pushing each other. The leaders are great too; they know how to push you without putting you off. I'm looking forward to my next race now that I have a time to beat. My eventual aim is to do a half marathon. Now exercise has become about doing something I enjoy rather than something I have to do to help me lose weight. I'm not going to lie, it was, and still is, hard work but the sense of achievement and just the fact I can tell people "I'm going running tonight" makes it worth it in my eyes. I've lost just over 7 1/2 stone in total now. I still have a lot of weight to lose and that's still something I'm focussed on, but now I am enjoying running it doesn't seem like such a chore anymore.”**

Wirral Run In England will be there every step of the way, supporting Laura in her quest. She has blown us away with her determination and we wish her the best of luck!