

CHARLOTTE WHITE

GB Age Grouper, Charlotte White, tells us about her journey into the world of Triathlon and Duathlon.



'Being in the spotlight, challenging myself and the rush of performing under pressure is what I love and what motivated me to pursue triathlon. This International Women's day I hope can inspire everyone to take up triathlon and know there is a community out there for all, no matter your age, gender, ethnicity, background or neurodiversity.'

My journey into triathlon was ignited post lock-down, roughly three years ago now. Before 2021 I honestly had never heard of triathlon, my family were madly into tennis and I was committed with dance. Training as a professional dancer was going to be my pathway growing up, however injury, pressure and overtraining, lead me to falling out of love with the sport. So I decided to hang up my shoes and focus on doing things that made me happy, connect with nature and move to music. Which is how I got into running.



Having ADHD (and not realising it at the time) meant that it was easy for me to over do the running, due to my high energy levels and hyperfocus. So I quickly picked up injuries. However this didn't stop me, living in London at the time with every exercise class under the sun, I then got obsessed with spin classes and strength work, which built up my aerobic capacity and running strength. With the load of intense cardio and strength work I was doing weekly, I needed something to balance everything out, so I took up regular swimming as a 'proud above water breaststroker'. Slowly but surely I was doing triathlon training weekly and I had no idea!

Then boom Covid hit. After feeling very isolated and disconnected from nature, I decided to move out of London back home to Brighton with my family. Lockdown for me like many had its positives and negatives. Being furloughed put a lot of things into perspective and was the motivation to finally get that road bike I had been wanting for years! Brighton opened up many doors, being by the sea meant I was able to swim more frequently and is how I came across Brighton Triathlon Race Series club. The community of people I didn't realise were missing in my life, who were doing crazy challenges every week! One of those being their mid-week sprint triathlon. After witnessing them racing on a local beach a few times, I plucked up the courage to ask 'what the hell was going on and how can I take part?'. Then just like that a friend and I signed up to a mid-week sprint triathlon, ending up doing better than I expected (even with above water breaststroke) and I was hooked.



It was the first time I had done an event which matched my experience of dance shows, where you're performing on stage to friends and family, displaying three different practiced routines with multiple dress changes in between. That feeling of being in the spotlight, challenging myself and the rush of performing under pressure is what I love and what motivated me to pursue triathlon. Then just like that I bought books, listened to podcasts and worked at Giant, (Shoreham) to educate myself with bikes. I started training properly combining all the sports, determined to get better and also learn how to swim front crawl! Fast forward three years, I currently race Triathlon and Duathlon at the top level of my age-group for Team GB, competing in races across the world. One of my first races was at [Hever Castle](#), an amazing venue that is part of the [Castle Race Series](#).



The community aspect of my local clubs continues to be a massive motivation for me, especially since my ADHD diagnosis. I have found a lot of athletes in clubs I train with also have ADHD or are wondering if they have it. It's really nice to train with people who understand and accept your neurodivergence and are going through a similar journey. I see triathlon now as a key part of my life helping reduce my anxiety and stay focused.





From personal experience being a female getting into a very male driven sport can seem intimidating at first, especially from a dance background the majority of people I trained with were female. I am lucky to have found communities where everyone is given the opportunity to train together and made to feel welcome.

In my first triathlon races I was terrified and I didn't know anyone. I thought I would feel like such an outsider and frowned upon for not having a clue how to put on my race number or timing chip! But this was never the case, after making the effort to speak to people, I soon realised everyone was feeling the same on race day and had been in a similar position. I overcame this anxious prediction and kept showing up, making the effort and building connections and now I see a handful of people I know at pretty much every race and that's the best part. Racing with friends watching them do incredible things and motivating each other gets you through, achieving things you didn't think were possible. Being part of a community that accepts you, allows you to be your true self is key for me and I can say does exist. The more we level up the triathlon field, the more this will become the norm for generations to come.



Currently I am looking for sponsorship, my next races planned are the European Standard Distance Duathlon Championships in Portugal, my first Half Iron distance in Eastbourne and Hever Castle Duathlon. One day I hope to do an Ironman and ultra running events.