



Five
minutes
with...

Amber
Bryan

As the first edition of CB went to press, Amber Bryan - personal trainer and founder of Lovefit Training based in Waterbeach - was pedalling into Land's End after a gruelling 900-mile charity cycle ride, which started at John O'Groats. Before she began her descent, we caught up with the 29-year-old fitness fanatic.

I was what you'd call a 'sporty child'. I went to school and sixth form at Colchester County High School where I was in most of the sports teams and competed in county level athletics. I also trained as a dancer for 18 years. After that I went to Cambridge Uni, where I studied MML (Modern and Medieval Languages) and continued to be interested in fitness.

I started thinking about personal training several years ago. I was looking for a way out of my city job where I had worked at a major investment bank for five years. I wanted to make sure that if I left a well paid job it was for something I truly wanted to do, not just a stop gap.

I had a personal trainer when I was working in London so spoke to him about becoming a personal trainer and then I was sold.

I set up Lovefit Training in 2008 after doing a Personal Training qualification with Premier Training International. The qualification includes nutrition, weight management, advanced anatomy and physiology, communication, business and marketing and special populations such as diabetes, obesity, asthma and orthopaedic conditions. I also have an Exercise to Music qualification through YMCA fit, which means I can teach classes such as aerobics and conditioning too.

I operate a 15-mile radius from my home in Waterbeach, so I travel north as far as Ely and south as far as Shelford. I have clients all over the Cambridge area.

There's not an age limit within the industry but there'll come a time when I switch focus.. I can't keep running all over the place for ever. I will maybe go into physiotherapy, sports injury or become an educator in the field.

When you get really good results with somebody it's immensely satisfying. Quite often it's the little things that are the most gratifying. Of course if somebody loses two stone

that's great, but when somebody tells you they were able to play football with their kids for the first time, or get back into that special pair of jeans, or they've come off months of painkillers for their back pain - that is the best feeling.

The John O'Groats to Land's End cycle is the first major sporting challenge I've embarked on. I've done all sorts of physical things in the past: hiking the Inca Trail, climbing Ben Nevis, running Race for Life, learning to surf, white-water rafting - but that's all been for fun. Cycling is completely new to me hence the "challenge" aspect of it.

When a distance-training client said he was doing the ride and looking for a cycling partner I volunteered myself. I barely ever ride a bike and hadn't ridden on the road before this, so cycling 900+ miles definitely qualifies as a challenge for me. I also thought it would be a nice way to see the UK.

I've been doing major, major training and have been building up my cycling mileage since April. I started with just a few 30 minute rides a week, either on my old mountain bike or on the spinning bike in my gym, and bought my road bike in June. I spent the best part of a month just getting the confidence to ride it properly then progressing to deats (clip in shoes) and acclimatising to dealing with traffic. Once I felt happy with the bike I increased my mileage and worked my way up to a 105 mile ride.

I'm pretty scared cycling down hills; I don't like going too fast!

Now my cycling skills have improved I want to complete an Olympic distance triathlon. I also want to climb Kilimanjaro and much to people's surprise I've not yet run a marathon so perhaps I ought to do that. None of these things would be for charity though as I'd quite like to do them. The bike ride is for charity because it truly is way out of my comfort zone.

Amber is cycling to raise money for Ataxia UK. To sponsor her challenge visit www.justgiving.com/amberbryan

To find out more about Amber's personal training business, visit www.lovefittraining.co.uk