

Edinburgh Reporter chats – Jenny MacLean

✘ WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DID YOU COME FROM

I'm Jenny MacLean of EnergyWise Health & Fitness. From Hertfordshire originally, Edinburgh has been my home for eight years now.

I specialise in one to one training, developing fitness programmes tailored to client needs, to help them feel fitter, look better and live better. I've been running the business for two years now, from my studio at Holyrood Business Park and I really enjoy it. It's a pleasure to help people achieve their fitness goals and get the results they want – whether it's to lose weight, get fit, or just feel healthier. I like to make it interesting and fun for them too.

I also work hard to achieve my own fitness goals. In this year's Edinburgh Marathon, I finished as the fastest Scottish woman and the sixth fastest woman in the race overall.

WHAT IS THE BUSINESS BOOK THAT YOU RECOMMEND THAT EVERYONE SHOULD READ

I've read a number of business books and have learned something useful from them all. But for me, the most important thing is always providing the best possible service to my clients. Technical skills, experience and knowledge are key in my line of work, but this job is all about the people I work with.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOUR BUSINESS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

My main strength is my energy – much of the day involves taking clients through their individual exercise routines, whether it's Pilates, running, or walking. Another strength is developing new ideas and ways to further enhance the service I offer. For instance, I am launching another new

product soon – the Energywise Lifestyle Audit, to help clients review their lifestyle and where changes could be made, to improve their fitness. I already help clients review their diet, but this will provide an additional ‘tool’ for developing positive and lasting health and fitness habits.

The result is my business weakness: I am always thinking of more ways I can help clients and this can make it tricky to switch off.

WHAT IS THE DEFINING MOMENT ON YOUR CAREER PATH THAT GOT YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW

I started working life as a mechanical engineer, but had always loved running, starting from when I was a student. This led me to think about how I could potentially develop a career – and a business from my interest in sport and exercise. I started taking aerobics classes and then when I moved to Edinburgh, I started training with a running club, which led to representing Scotland in cross country races and winning marathon and half marathon championships.

I also trained as a Pilates instructor and did some martial arts training. When I got a job as a fitness instructor, this was the defining moment, as I had achieved my goal of changing career and also taken the first step towards running my own business in the future.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR SPARE TIME

I like being out in the fresh air – walking or running in the countryside. I also enjoy going to the theatre, cinema and reading. Spending time with family and friends is always something I make time for too.

DO YOU THINK YOU ACHIEVE A GOOD WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Yes, most of the time – it’s all part of living a healthy life.

WHAT MAKES EDINBURGH THE BEST LOCATION FOR YOU TO LIVE/WORK

There's lots of open space and beautiful scenery – I enjoy the peace of the countryside, but I also like the diversity, vibrancy and buzz of the city too.

WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL AREA OF EDINBURGH OR SPECIAL PLACE

Arthur's Seat: that's where my husband, Euan, proposed.

DO YOU HAVE A MENTOR

I don't have one at the moment, but it's something I'm considering.

WHICH NETWORKING GROUPS IN EDINBURGH HAVE YOU FOUND PARTICULARLY HELPFUL

4 Networking has been most helpful for me, for the excellent support, ideas and help in developing my business. I also like No Excuses, which provides an informal and relaxing environment to network in.

WHO ARE YOUR BUSINESS HEROES

While she is not a business hero as such, Paula Radcliffe is an inspiration – someone I admire for her talent, determination and ability to recover from setbacks: these skills are all invaluable in business too.

WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS FOR THE NEXT YEAR

My goal is to make the benefits of exercise available to more and more people, especially those who don't consider themselves sporty, but need to be fit for the day to day challenges of their lives.

DESCRIBE YOUR TYPICAL DAY FOR US

Like most self-employed people, there's no such thing as a typical day for me, but it usually starts with cycling to the studio. The rest of the day is spent working with clients on their exercise programmes, teaching Pilates classes and I also always make time for a run.

WHAT IS YOUR PLAN OF ATTACK FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

I'm interested in learning neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) techniques, as another means of helping clients think positively about the benefits of diet, lifestyle and exercise.