

'MY LIFE IN A DAY'

Jazz Carlin

The Olympic swimmer talks to us about life after retirement and her new online swimming advice and training platform, Swim with Jazz

Words: Jo Ebsworth

Work

'I swam as a baby and joined a Learn to Swim club at the age of five, but I only started taking swimming more seriously around the age of 14. I didn't have the best technique or turns, but I did have the engine and determination to do my best. At 16, I joined the Senior programme at the Welsh National Centre in Swansea. Moving away from home was tough, but I wanted to give myself the best possible chance to achieve something in my sport, plus I enjoyed challenging myself to be better.'

'There were many highs and lows during my 14-year professional

career. Not being able to compete in the 2012 Olympics due to catching glandular fever took me to quite a dark place mentally, especially as taking part in your home games is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. My confidence took a knock and I almost walked away from the sport. But after a few months of not even looking at a pool, I had an even bigger drive to commit to another four years of training. Racing on a



world stage at Rio and being able to perform at my best was amazing. I'd given my all and was at peace with the idea that I'd done everything I could, so winning two silver Olympic medals was a dream come true.'

'I retired from swimming two years later, in 2018, because I felt it was

time to experience new things, help others and give back to my sport. I decided to create an online platform that gives people the tools and resources they need to swim successfully, because it's only when you perform at an elite level that you understand the importance of nutrition, strength and

conditioning, training plans and the psychological side of things. Swim with Jazz (swimwithjazz.co.uk) launched just after lockdown and it offers advice from myself and the coaches who supported me in the lead up to the Olympics, but I also get to coach people in the water. I love helping others improve their performance and lifestyle, and become the best swimmer they can be.'



JAZZ'S SWIMMING TIPS

- 'So many people swim at the same pace using the same stroke. Mix things up by swimming at different speeds, incorporating shorter, faster bursts of activity, and introducing a pull buoy or kickboard to work your upper and lower body separately.'
- 'Schedule your swim sessions into your week and make sure you are properly fuelled and hydrated for them. Planning what you're going to do in the pool before you get in it can make a big difference to your training and results.'
- 'Allow swimming to open you up to new experiences. If you try open water swimming, do it early in the morning and make sure you give yourself time to watch the sunrise.'

Life

'I'm not a great morning person. I might occasionally wake up early to go for a sunrise swim, but I normally start my day later by going to the gym to do a strength and conditioning session, which sets me up. Afterwards, I'll have an egg-based brunch at home to fill up on protein.'

'I used to push my body to its limits in training, which left me feeling exhausted, so it's been great to rediscover how happy and energised fitness makes me feel now. I also like setting myself new challenges in a non-competitive way and discovering new passions. Cycling from London to Paris last year was an amazing experience.

'My days and weeks are always different now, but I enjoy mixing things up after living such a regimented lifestyle. On top of coaching twice a week, my days are filled with creating new online content, keeping social media fresh, writing training plans for clients and lots of admin, plus I also get to work with great brands who share my passion for promoting a healthy lifestyle, such as Jazz Apple (jazzapple.com), who I teamed up with after lockdown to encourage people to get back in the water. Some evenings, I might not get back from coaching until 9.30pm, but generally I'll finish work around 5-6pm.'

'For dinner, I love to get creative in the kitchen and experiment with new flavours by cooking from scratch using different spices. I used to have to eat a lot of food and make sure it was full of the right nutrients. Now, I get to enjoy my food, although my portions are now a lot smaller!'

'To switch off, I watch films and box sets, listen to music, and see friends and family. I also like the novelty of going out to dinner now. I've always been a big sleeper, so I'm usually in bed by 10pm, but if my body is telling me I need more time to recharge, I'll go to bed earlier.'

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