

The Desperately Unfit Do a runDisney Virtual 5k: A runDisney Event Article

by Carolyn Brooke-Millward, PassPorter Guest Contributor

My husband (I call him DH for Dear Husband!) and I are happy little round Pooh-bears. We potter along through life being reasonably active but avoiding any 'proper' exercise wherever possible.

However, it is a lifelong dream of mine to participate in a Disney race of some kind, despite witnessing DH's attempts in 2014 at an annual marathon in the UK called the Great North Run, where it took him over 5 hours to run/limp 13 miles. He was overtaken at one point by a man carrying a fridge, was given encouragement by a bunch of kids cycling alongside him, ("go on son, keep going!" they yelled, much to his embarrassment!), and he arrived at the finish line with severe sunburn and blisters the size of Ireland on the soles of his feet. But at least he did it, and he raised some money for charity while he was at it!

Having seen how hard that was for DH, I knew I stood pretty much a zero chance of being able to take part in a Disney marathon at any point. But then runDisney changed the goalposts a bit by releasing something called a Virtual Running Shorts 5K -- what on earth was that? Oh, it's a race that we could run in our own time, during a 6-week long period, anywhere we like? And we didn't need to prove we did it in a certain time or anything? Wow!

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 □I went home and talked to DH about it, and he loved the idea, so as soon as registration opened I signed us both up. There was some initial confusion as to how the race bibs would be sent to us, but in the end Disney put up a link on the event website for us to print our own bibs off.

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 □As we thought it was a bit daft to both get exactly the same medal, DH signed up for the second run, the Mickey Red Pants, and I signed up for the next one, the White Glove. However, we planned on doing the run together at some point in the middle weekend.

We put together a training plan, which wasn't too vigorous but was meant to build up stamina and strength. That lasted for about a week, after which time we lost interest and began making excuses not to go out for a walk after work -- it was too cold, too hot, too wet, the usual stuff. Not the best start!

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 □We had previously agreed that neither of us was fit enough to actually run for 5K, so had compromised by agreeing to do the race at a very

brisk walk. The plan was to pick whichever day in our chosen weekend had the drier weather, and head out for a local park for the day. As the weekend approached though, the weather was looking ropey for both days, and in addition, our builder decided he needed more tiles and grout for the downstairs bathroom that we are having tiled, so we spent the very wet weekend shopping for tiles and other sundries, and postponed our 5K for another couple of weeks.

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□ On Saturday, July 2, 2016, we happened to be in London for a long weekend, with tickets to a festival on the Friday and to a motor racing event on the Sunday. We slept well on the Friday night in our hotel, and got up at a reasonable time on the Saturday, with the weather looking bright and sunny. We made sure to have a light but protein-packed breakfast, and with our race bibs pinned to our t-shirts, walked over the road from the hotel and into Hyde Park. Luckily, there weren't too many tourists about and the race bibs didn't seem to draw any attention, as we hadn't wanted to be too conspicuous!

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□ I set off my phone app to record distance walked, and we began our circuit of the park. Hyde Park is one of the largest parks in London, so we had to be careful we didn't go too far away from our starting point. We walked briskly through the Italian gardens, admiring the beautiful flowers and plants very quickly, and followed the Long Water to the Serpentine river, and then on to the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. The park is extremely pretty and was a welcome distraction from the fact that we were walking a 5k! We continued a bit further, but then my phone app was showing we had walked 2.5K, so we curved round a bit and tried to take a slightly different route back. Luckily, the park is also very flat, with lots of pathways, which made for easier walking.

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□ We were wearing very comfortable clothing and trainers, and made sure we had bottled water with us, although the weather wasn't overly hot that day. By the time we got within the last half mile or so, we were feeling a bit tired though -- bear in mind that we had only stuck to our training plan for a week, before getting bored and chucking it in. Had we stuck to it properly, we might not have been so tired at this point!

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□ Eventually, we could see the Italian Gardens in the near distance, and that reinvigorated us a bit -- we strode towards them all gung-ho and full of beans, feeling ecstatic that we had completed our goal and had successfully finished a runDisney race. We spotted a lovely little tea-room, and gleefully collapsed onto chairs there, ordering coffee, cold drinks, and big slices of cake to reward ourselves with!

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I am extremely happy that we did this, and to be honest we would probably do it again next year, if Disney decide to run these events again. It was lots of fun, we felt quite smug at having raised money for a worthwhile cause, and I had ticked something off my bucket list! To date, only DH's medal has arrived from Disney, I am still waiting for mine, but his is amazing -- we were pleasantly surprised at how big and heavy it is. Well done, us!

About The Author: Carolyn is a life-long Disney fan from the UK, having made many visits to the parks in Paris, Florida, and California. Later this year will see her first visit to Disneyland in Tokyo and Hong Kong!

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