



Celine Turner is 38 years old and two years ago quit her corporate job to forge a career in health and wellness.

Now a coach specialising in functional fitness, injury prevention and rehabilitation, Celine also leads group exercise classes with the aim of encouraging more women to “move their bodies for the enjoyment of it and the positives it can bring.”

Celine was first introduced to lifting weights six years ago - like many women - by a Personal Trainer who she was working with at the time.

Celine was training for a triathlon and had a number of niggling injuries that she couldn't resolve: so she lifted her fear and turn to weights.

Celine told us, *“At first I was a bit skeptical as to how ‘serious lifts’ like deadlifts and back squats would help with an endurance sport, but I couldn’t have been more pleasantly surprised.”*

*“Although I don’t like admitting it, at that time I was a lot more preoccupied with what my body looked like (rather than what it could do), so I also enjoyed the positive effects that lifting had on my body composition and size.”*

Celine didn't always have the confidence to try out these new challenges and admitted, “when I was in my 20's and early 30's, lack of confidence and lack of knowledge used to put me off the weightlifting space in my gym.”

*“Fear of being looked at, judged, doing something stupid or injuring myself meant I stayed away from the main lifting area. Being shown how to lift properly gave me confidence and, slowly but surely, I started to feel like I belonged there as much as anyone else.”*

Celine now actively steps into areas “still dominated by males” and gets “really excited when I see females using the lifting platforms and racks but that only serves to remind me that it's still something I don't see often enough.”

Celine believes encouraging more women to ask gym staff, trained or qualified individuals about weight training will mean more empowering information reaches those in fear of doing it wrong.

*“A stereotype that seems to persist is that lifting weights will make women ‘bulky’. One thing I do to help address this is, tell someone how much I can deadlift/squat, let them look me up and down, see that I look decidedly more weedy than bulky, and then make up their own minds! Women who lift come in all shapes and sizes.”*

*“The sense of “accomplishment and mastery is so much more satisfying than the number of calories burnt in a workout” giving powerful benefits which exceed just the physical”.*

*“Like many women, it's the ‘other’ benefits which make lifting so appealing. It forges a real connection between mind and body. It makes me feel strong, capable and confident, knowing that my body (and mind) can cope with the majority of what life may throw at it”.*

Labels and stereotypes are prevalent in conversations about women lifting weights and Celine believes the message needs to be corrected.

*“I'm not a huge fan of the ‘Strong not Skinny’ tagline, as it implies that there's something wrong with being skinny. Many women are naturally ‘skinny’, so it sends quite a negative message to them.”*

*“Strong is not a size sends the message that you can be strong regardless of your body type, but doesn't suggest that you have to be strong above anything else.”*

*“There are so many wonderful benefits to lifting weights, some of which are incredibly powerful and feed into other areas of life that could really help girls and women, such as self-confidence and mental health.”*