



MUDDY DOG
A BATTERSEA CHALLENGE

PRESS PACK

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#MUDDYDOGCHALLENGE

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Age requirements, sign up fees and £100 minimum sponsorship apply.

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We are thrilled that LV= continues to support the Muddy Dog Challenge for the third year running





ARE YOU READY FOR A CHALLENGE?

Battersea's Muddy Dog Challenge is back, bigger and better than ever before! In its fourth year, the obstacle course is the UK's first 2.5km and 5km that you can tackle alongside your dog.

No matter your fitness level, everyone is welcome to take part with their four-legged companion, or you can take it on solo – it's all about having fun.

Participants can expect to hurriedly hop over 'Dog Tyred', and swiftly splash through 'Dog Baths' before crossing the finish line, all in aid of the dogs and cats at Battersea.

Animal lovers taking part are asked to raise a minimum sponsorship of £100 to help Battersea care for the thousands of animals who arrive at the animal shelter every year.

For more information please visit muddydog.battersea.org.uk



ARE YOU READY FOR A CHALLENGE?

NOTTINGHAM

Saturday 9 June and Sunday 10 June 2018
Wollaton Hall, Nottingham, NG8 2AE

WINDSOR

Saturday 30 June and Sunday 1 July 2018
Windsor Great Park, Windsor, SL4 2BA

MANCHESTER

Saturday 7 July 2018
Ashley Hall, Ashley, Altrincham, WA14 3QA

PETERBOROUGH

Saturday 28 July 2018
Elton Hall, Peterborough, PE8 6SQ

CARDIFF

Saturday 18 August 2018
Coedarhydyglyn Park, St. Nicholas, Cardiff, CF5 6SF

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Saturday 29 September and Sunday 30 September 2018
Eridge Park, Eridge green, Tunbridge Wells, TN3 9JD

If you would like to attend the Muddy Dog Challenge in a press capacity,
please contact o.lazarus@battersea.org.uk or b.george@battersea.org.uk



HEAR FROM OUR CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS

DAVID GANDY

Internationally-renowned supermodel and Battersea Ambassador David Gandy took part in the Windsor Muddy Dog Challenge with his Battersea dog Dora last year. They're both planning to take part in the challenge again later this year.

David Gandy said: "I loved running the Muddy Dog Challenge with Dora last year, and we can't wait to do it again in 2018. It's such a great day and Dora and all the other dogs loved getting involved and taking on the obstacles. The Muddy Dog Challenge is also a wonderful way to support Battersea – a charity which takes in thousands of vulnerable dogs and cats each year and gives them a second chance with a new family. I'd encourage any animal lover to take part – whether or not you own a dog. My one piece of advice is to take it at your own pace. It's not a race and it's all about having fun!"

« David Gandy with Dora at last year's Muddy Dog Challenge in Windsor



≈ Rosie Marcel with her dog Cohiba at last year's Muddy Dog Challenge

FIVE MINUTES WITH ROSIE MARCEL

Holby City star Rosie Marcel shares her experience of running the Muddy Dog Challenge and talks about how her dog Cohiba changed her life.

You took part in the Muddy Dog Challenge last year with your dog, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Cohiba. What did you think of the event?

It was an amazing day. Even when it started with torrential rain it didn't dampen anyone's spirits. It was so much fun!

What was your highlight from the day?

The highlight for me was seeing what Cohiba could do. He was recently adopted at the time and I had no idea how strong and fast he was. He's taken a lot of time to trust me and going through the water and jumping in with him was wonderful. The other highlight was that we finished!

What did you find the most challenging?

The challenging part was doing the run outside. I'd been mostly training on a treadmill and breathing cold air was tough on the lungs.

Tell us about Cohiba. How has he changed your life?

Cohiba is amazing. We've learnt a lot about him in the last year and a half. We adopted Cohiba from another rescue, and he has really blossomed with us. He was a very stand-offish boy before who'd clearly been over-trained, and he'd definitely been shouted at a lot. We couldn't even stroke him when he first arrived. Now he's a big softie who cuddles up with us on the sofa with the other two boys. He's excited every day. We love him and only wish we'd had him longer. We think he should've always been our dog. But we found him when he needed us the most.

What did you and Cohiba do to train for the Muddy Dog Challenge?

To be honest... not much! My schedule had been so busy up until the run that I hadn't got out much. Probably some treadmill running, and a couple of evening runs and that's it.

“The highlight for me was seeing what Cohiba could do. I had no idea how strong and fast he was.”

You've got a pretty busy life between filming for Holby City and your family. What do you do to keep fit?

Having a husband that owns two gyms and is younger than me is definitely an incentive to go to the gym. Plus having a baby belly, three years after having a baby, is enough to get me to the gym hopefully three times a week. But it can be a real struggle to do it - mums are very busy people.

Aside from your family and Cohiba, what's the one thing you couldn't live without?

Other than family and animals.... cooking, tea and carbs.

When you're not filming for Holby City, what do you like to do in your spare time?

In my spare time I like to do as much with my family as possible. I love gardening. I'd really like to be able to retire and foster as many old dogs as I can. The old ones need the love. Just like me.



Rosie Marcel stars in the BBC drama series Holby City as Jac Naylor. The actress took part in Battersea's Muddy Dog Challenge last year and talks all things from her rescue dog, Cohiba, to fitness.



GIVING BACK WITH MUDDY DOG CHALLENGE

It was an eventful summer for 25-year-old Katherine Neal and her husband Tommy from Hampshire, when their three-year-old beautiful Husky, Luna, was caught up in an unexpected car accident last May. Despite suffering serious leg injuries, the Husky is taking part in this year's Muddy Dog Challenge, alongside Katherine. Read more about Katherine and Luna's inspirational story below:

“It was heartbreaking to see her like this.”

≈ Luna suffered serious leg injuries after being caught up in a car accident

Conference Operator Katherine, said: “It was Saturday afternoon when we decided to take Luna out on a walk. We took her on the normal route we take daily in the beautiful countryside of Hampshire. However, little did we know how her life could change so quickly.”

The hardest part for us was knowing she couldn't understand what was going on, it was heartbreaking to see her like this. Luna's recovery was complicated as she avoided walking on her injured leg, which meant she lost muscle that she later had to regain.”

Katherine continued, “Luna was walking off-lead when the accident occurred on a quiet country road near our house. Everything was fine until she spotted a cat and became distracted, when suddenly, a car hit her.

Katherine continued, “It took at least 3 months for Luna to start using her back leg again. However, with hard work and determination, Luna became her happy self again and has since made a full recovery thanks to the treatment she received. She's now back to her previous strength and we can't wait to get her out and enjoy the sunshine this summer.

“It was awful. I was so worried she wouldn't be able to use her leg again because of the extent of her injuries. We rushed her to an emergency vets in Reading, where we were told she had completely shattered her back leg and needed a big operation.

“Last year was one of the hardest. Now we've decided to give back and take on the Muddy Dog Challenge to raise money for the thousands of animals who need help at Battersea every year.”

Our beautiful, brave girl needed to have a temporary metal bar placed through the bone and around the outside of her leg. We knew it was going to be a long road to recovery and Luna needed multiple operations, physio and hydrotherapy sessions over the coming months to help her walk again.

Katherine and Luna are taking part in this year's Muddy Dog Challenge in Windsor on 30 June. To find out more information and to sign up, visit muddydog.battersea.org.uk.



≈ Luna is back to her previous strength and the duo are ready to take on Battersea's Muddy Dog Challenge



TRAINING FOR THE MUDDY DOG CHALLENGE

You don't have to be a gym fanatic to take part in the Muddy Dog Challenge. It's all about having fun and – with 2.5km and 5km options – you can take part, regardless of your fitness level. If you do decide to push yourself to do your first 5km, Battersea's Emma Reynolds is here to help. Emma is a Battersea employee, a proud owner of Geoff the Labrador, and an ultra-marathon runner. She's combined all her expertise to put together a training plan to help you and your dog get ready for the fun day.

EMMA'S TOP FIVE TRAINING TIPS

- 1.** Make sure you're training and running in a good pair of trainers. Investing in a good pair of shoes will make all the difference and they go a long way to preventing strains and muscle injuries. Don't worry, you can always put them in the washing machine after the course!
- 2.** Make sure you've done a few runs with your dog before the big day, to get used to how they feel on the lead – particularly if you're running with a larger dog. We advise you to fit your dog with a harness.
- 3.** Keep hydrated – bring some water for you and your dog, and make sure you both drink plenty during training runs.
- 4.** On the day, neither you nor your dog have to do every obstacle. If either of you feel uncomfortable with any of them, you can just go around them. Remember, it's the taking part that counts.
- 5.** Most importantly – have fun! That's what Battersea's Muddy Dog Challenge is all about.



WARMING UP

Emma Reynolds says: “Warming up is the most important part of any training, as it reduces your chances of injuring yourself. Taking just a few minutes to do some stretches – which combine light cardio with stretching – will make all the difference. After you’ve finished your warm up, you should walk for five minutes to help get the blood flowing before your run.”

Here are some tips to help you warm up before you start training:

WALKING LUNGES

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your hands on your hips or by your side. Take a big step forward with your right leg and drop your hips until your left knee almost touches the floor. Keep your torso straight and make sure your right knee is always above your front foot. Next step forward with your left leg so you come back to an upright position. Repeat on the opposite leg. Do twenty lunge steps, alternating each step and moving forward in a straight line.

BUTT KICKS

Stand with your legs around shoulder-width apart and your arms comfortably by your side. Flex your right knee and kick your right heel up toward your glutes, then bring your foot back down to the floor. Repeat the movement with your left foot. Do this exercise for 30 seconds at a quick pace so it feels like you’re ‘jogging’ on the spot.

TOY SOLDIERS

Stand with your hips shoulder-width apart and engage your core muscles. Keep your knees straight, lift your right leg straight out in front of you and try to touch your toes with your left hand. If you can reach your toe, that’s great – if not, just stretch your arm out as far down your leg as you can. Return to your starting position and repeat the movement with your left leg and right arm. Do ten toy soldiers on each side.

SQUATS

Start with your feet just over shoulder-width apart. Keep your back straight and your knees centred over your feet. Now slowly bend your knees, lowering yourself until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Make sure you keep your knees in line with your feet as you squat, before slowly coming back to standing position.

STRAIGHT-LEG KICKS

Start with your feet shoulder-width apart. Lift one arm straight out in front of you to shoulder height, with your fingers stretched out and your palm facing the ground. Kick your opposite leg forward towards your extended arm, make sure your core is engaged to help you keep balanced. Repeat ten times, then change the extended arm and leg and repeat ten times on the other side.



TRAINING PLAN

Emma says: “If you’ve never run a race before, or you’ve been out of practice for a long time, don’t worry. By training twice a week, you’ll be ready for your first 5km in just two months. If you’re running the obstacle course with your four-legged friend, take them with you during your training runs - so you can get fit together.”

Before training with your dog, it’s a good idea to consult your vet. During the summer months, it’s especially important to keep your dog hydrated during training, and making sure to give them regular breaks. We also recommend using multiple training routes to help your dog practice different running tracks.

Week 1: Training sessions 1 – 2

Time yourself and jog for two minutes, then walk for one minute. Do this for around 20 - 30 minutes.

Week 2: Training sessions 3 – 4

Increase the time between walks, by running four minutes and then walking for one minute. Do this for around 20 - 30 minutes.

Week 3 to 6: Training sessions 5 – 10

Increase the interval of time between walking breaks by two minutes each week. By week six, you should be running for 12 minutes and walking for one minute.

Week 7: Training sessions 11 – 12

This week try doing two 3km runs without stopping. If you start feeling uncomfortable during the run, try slowing your pace or walking briskly instead of stopping.

Week 8: Training session 13 and Muddy Dog on the weekend

Run one practice 5km in the lead up to the challenge – and that’s it! You’re ready to go!

POST-RUN

Emma says: “After your run, it’s important to cool down. Like the warm up, this helps prevent injury and your muscles will thank you for it the next day. To cool down, you should use slow, static stretches – rather than the high intensity ones you used for your warm up.”

During your cool down, focus on major muscle groups and pay particular attention to areas that seem tight after your run. Focus on your legs, upper and lower back, groin and hips. Slowly ease your way into each stretch and hold it for 30 to 45 seconds.”

For more tips on training with your dog, watch Battersea’s Canine Behaviourist and Training Advisor, Sarah Whiffen, by visiting muddydog.battersea.org.uk/tips-training