

Meet Michelle...

Photography by: www.sharynthompson.com Michelle wears: www.scody.com.au

Two years ago, Michelle was a healthy, fit and competitive forty year old, happily married with two children. Her passion was pole fitness and she had been featured in an international pole magazine and invited as a VIP guest to watch the American pole fitness competition in New York. She trained hard at the gym and running as well as spending hours working on pole tricks whilst caring for a family and working part-time – life was full.

Shortly after a mass was unfortunately discovered which resulted in Michelle having to under go a hysterectomy. After four months of recovery, she started back at the gym doing light weights to build her strength up again to do pole and get back to work, however she started noticing something was just not right down below.

After going to the doctors and then a gynecologist, Michelle had developed quite a severe case of pelvic organ prolapse - where three of her organs were trying to fall out through her weak pelvic floor. This is an incredibly embarrassing condition that most women do not talk about but Michelle hopes that by being open she can get other women talking about it as pelvic floor issues

affect 1 in 4 women at some stage in their lives.

Michelle opted not to have surgery as there is a 1 in 3 case of failure rate. This has meant she has sadly had to give up pole which she still gets upset over as it was a true passion of hers.

Infact in the short term she had to stop almost everything and do intensive physio to get some strength in her pelvic floor. Because of this she decided to do volunteer work at the Royal Brisbane children's hospital in the wonder factory. "It makes you realise what you are going through is nothing to the pain and suffering you see some of these children go through" says Michelle.

One shift that changed a lot of things for her was working in oncology. "I was really taken back by how many children have cancer of some form. At the end of the shift we were informed that two of the little girls we had been playing with in previous weeks did not make it". It was at this point Michelle wanted to do more for these beautiful kids.

The hospital had a charity bike ride from Redcliffe to Twin Waters coming up so Michelle and a friend decided to take the 100km challenge and raised \$7,700 for the event. This gave her a new focus

and sense of achievement and she was satisfied that she was helping kids in need.

The children's hospital foundation is the nominated charity for the Mooloolaba triathlon so that will be her next goal. "I have started back in the pool and I'm confident about the swim and bike ride. My challenge is the fact I can no longer run. I am so used to doing things to the maximum and I'm highly competitive. To walk the run is going to be mentally challenging for me and I have to continually use my mantra that I'm completing, not competing".

Michelle now has three new passions in life – fundraising for the children's hospital, triathlon - to look after her own condition and raising awareness for other women, that sport can still be part of your life if you suffer pelvic floor dysfunction.

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