



FIT FOR LIFE

Stand to attention

Practice makes perfect in all things - and Carol Westmorland is focusing on learning to stand

This month will see a new member welcomed into our household. Biscuit, so named because no-one called Biscuit could possibly be a threat, will bring the number of open mouths in the morning to 11. Biscuit is, we wholeheartedly believe, going to be an impossibly adorable Tibetan terrier. Temperament without a shred of terror, just mellow and kind and a friend to the others.

In other news, recent findings state that sitting on one's behind is as bad as smoking. This shocking fact has sent waves of disbelief through the land. "How could this be?" The nation cried in unison and suddenly stood up.

I consider myself very active. There is not a day where I stay still for long, yet should I stand up on both feet for more than three hours I find myself needing to perform a seated balance stretch on any surface suitable. This, in case you are curious, involves perching on said surface, and raising my legs skyward to release my lower back. Standing for too long compresses my spine and I begin to ache. When I say standing, this is not the same as staying upright with movement. What I find difficult is standing still within a confined area - an example would be when on marshal duty, red flag in hand, for my cycling club, Border City Wheelers. A space designated by the Risk Assessor and always a space that is, for the very nature of the exercise, deemed important. This limits opportunity.

The same ache happens if I am made to shuffle in a



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crowd.

As an expert in all things postural I realise that with time I will become accustomed to standing still in this fashion. So I am starting right now. I will stand rather than sit whenever I can. I am standing while I type. I will stand while I read. I will stand while I chat.

I see no need to practice shuffling and will simply avoid crowds. Christmas shopping in Fenwicks will be out.

Having so many mouths to feed means that my day involves plenty of ups and downs but this does not count. I will not be happy until I can stand for over three hours without complaint.

That old adage or the one that I seem to have preached for a long time is: "practice makes perfect and frequency leads to skill". I know I can do this.

Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.co.uk