



FIT FOR LIFE

You go, girl!

Carol Westmorland praises 'This Girl Can', the campaign to get more women to exercise

We shared our lives for many years. We looked the same. We both had messy hair albeit hers was crinkly and wool. Mine my own. She also stood four inches high; me some five feet taller.

It was her message that drew us together. She held a plaque that said, 'housework makes you ugly'. She being ugly - which she wasn't. She was just made to look dishevelled.

Sport England's campaign, 'This Girl Can', is described as celebrating, 'the women who are doing their thing no matter how they do it, how they look or even how sweaty they get. To prove that judgment is a barrier that can be overcome.'

I am shocked. It seems us females are being put off sport in case our hair moves out of place and we sweat. This is terrible. Now, I admit I will do what I can to avoid housework; I turn into Tabitha Twitchett around dust and have a strong hatred toward chemicals for that same reason, but sport? No.

Drenched hair. Make up washed away. It sends out a clear message - this is me. It is a look that I know (and I have asked) others love too.

At risk of inciting disquiet, if the belief is that sweaty girls are no longer attractive to, ahem, men, then I have news. Men like the more natural look. They like to see the real you. They like to know you are happy to sweat, get covered in mud and break a nail. What they do not like is fragile.

So, 'This Girl Can' is an



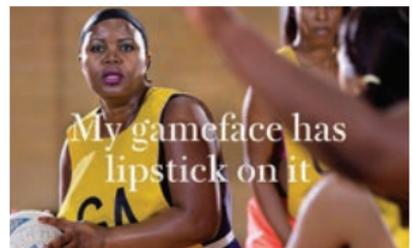
'DO NOT STOP EXERCISING OR PLAYING SPORT BECAUSE YOU (GASP) LOOK SWEATY AND THINK PEOPLE ARE JUDGING YOU'

initiative to promote this message. It says be you. Do not stop exercising or playing sport because you (gasp) look sweaty and think people are judging you. They may well be but for the right reasons.

Statistically, two million more men exercise than women. I see this. Yet we female cyclists look great in a skin suit.

Sport gives you a passion and exercise makes you glow and come alive. That is true beauty. Not having poker straight hair.

www.thisgirlcan.co.uk



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.uk