


# MyWellnessConnected byHelenCooper

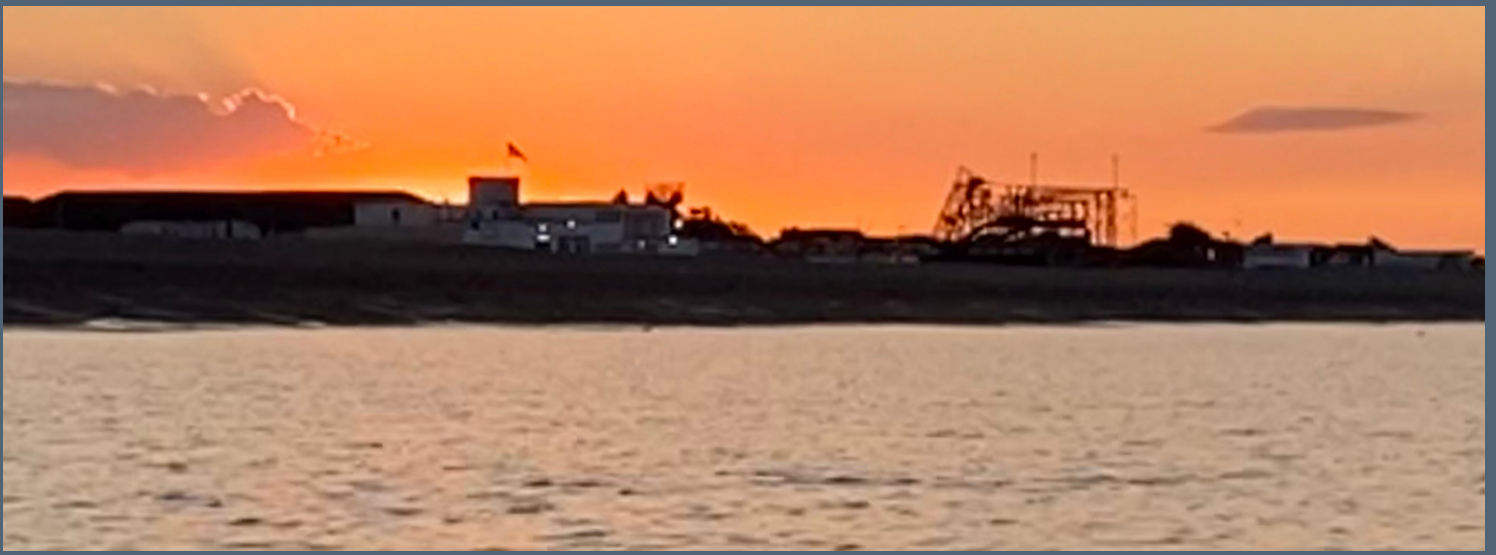


 Havant Open Water Swimming 

<b>5,004</b>	TIME	2:36:09
METERS	PACE	3:07 /100m
	AVG HR	128 bpm
	STROKES	3,621

## Swim Couch to 5k Journey - I DID IT!!!!!!

August didn't bring the long, sunny, calm days I had hoped for, and I thought I would never get it done, but suddenly there it was..... a tiny glimmer of hope. Sunday 29th August looked like the date to go for it! I had a test run on Friday 27th and managed to bash out a respectable 2,500m reasonably comfortably, and the support gears rolled into motion. Two kayakers volunteered to follow me, and carry drinks and energy gels if I needed them, together with an emergency tow float and a rescue line.



We met on the beachfront on Hayling Island at 5.30am to beat the bank holiday weekend crowds as I expected the swim to take about 3 hours.

I set off into the rising sun at 5.48am, feeling a little nervous but ready for the challenge ahead.

I have absolutely no idea what was going through my head during the ensuing swim. I know the moon was high above my right shoulder as I headed on my outward swim towards the east and was really comforting.

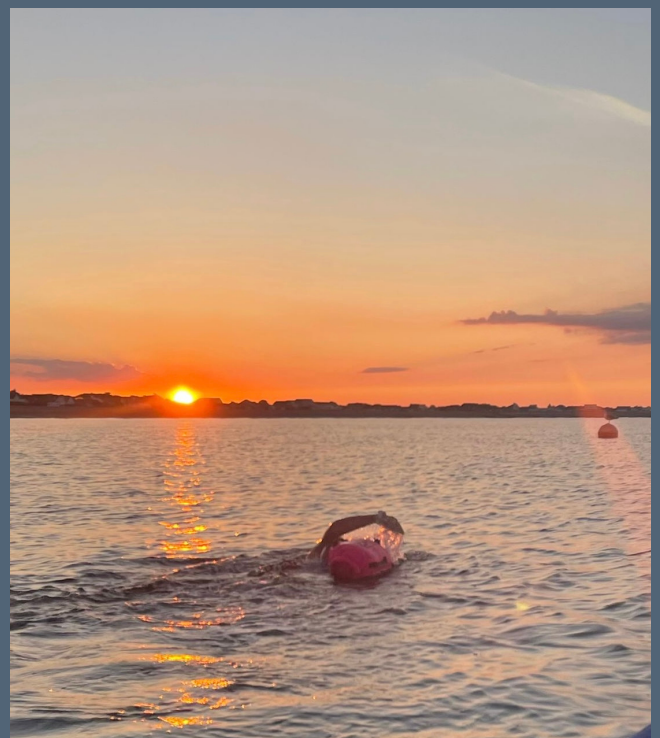






The sun was rising slowly ahead of me and the sea below me was an incredible shade of green.

I kept checking in with different things; my overall technique; my arms, (where's the kayak?), hands, breathing, (and relax), soft feet, leg kick, (where's the land?), breathe, neck rotation, body rotation, (and relax), glide, clear my goggles, (where's the moon?), pull my hat back on..... over and over and over again.....for three thousand strokes.



I turned after 3,000m back into the strengthening tide. It was tough. My pace at that moment was putting me at under two and a half hours which was incredible. But that tide. I had to actually increase everything. Kick harder, pull harder, breathe harder, try and somehow find more energy while all the time my energy reserves had been depleting. My tow float kept rotating (and I had to ditch it at 4k), my goggles kept leaking, my hat kept slipping off... But that aim of beating two and a half hours kept me pushing on as hard as I could.

Somehow the distance remaining slowly went down. I could see the finish point ahead but it didn't at times seem to get any closer. And then, as I headed to shallower water, I started to see the starfish. Hundreds of them, clustered all over the sea bed. It was completely beautiful. I've seen a few before but never like this. It gave me a huge boost, like a sign, and I pushed on.

Suddenly I was there. I had smashed my original estimate of three hours, and am absolutely delighted that I swam my first ever 5k in 2 hrs 36 minutes! And in the sea!





Then they started to arrive....my partner, my best friend, my swimming friends..... I was awarded 'Star of the Week' and we cracked open a bottle of bubbly.

Thank you so very much to all of you who have sponsored and encouraged me. It's been a massive challenge to go from 0 to 5k in 5 months but I got there! Swimming will now always be an important part of my life.

My chosen charity is my local refuge - Stop Domestic Abuse, Southern (SDAS). The total currently stands at £1,136. If you would like to top that up a little please copy and paste the following link into your web browser:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/HelenCooper41>

