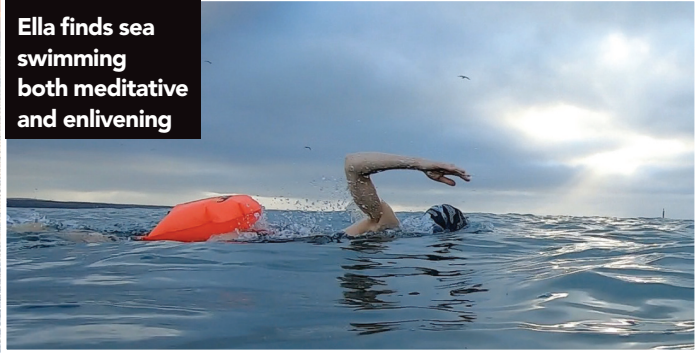




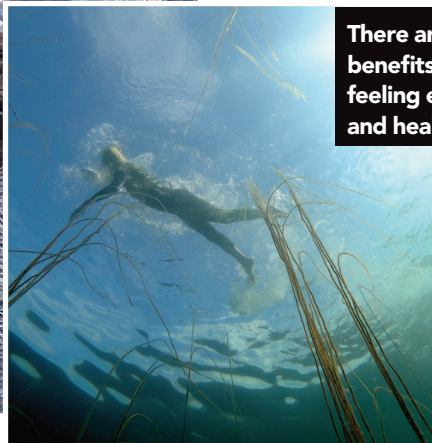
outdoor swims **FITNESS**

Ella finds sea swimming both meditative and enlivening



‘Sea swimming brought me back to feeling like myself after having my son’

There are many benefits, such as feeling energised and healthier



‘*SWIMMING HAS MADE ME MORE RESILIENT*’

Ella Turk-Richards, 42, from Penzance, Cornwall, has recently trained as an open-water swimming coach

‘Growing up in Penzance, I’ve always seen people swimming all year round. The older women who did it always stuck in my mind. I admired them for being able to get to such a point where they could cope with the cold. I’ve swum in the sea consistently for the last 10 years but, until four years ago, I’d stop from November to May.

After I had my son Elliot, now three, my life turned upside down. I was exhausted and felt deprived of social interaction. A month after giving birth, I restarted sea swimming and it brought me back to feeling like myself. Initially, I swam every two weeks in winter, but for the last four winters I’ve swum most days. I met other winter swimmers and the demographic

felt so diverse, from people in their 20s up to those in their 80s.

I swim very early – I love the morning energy. I find winter swimming meditative as well as enlivening. I’m very mindful of my time in the water, in winter, I swim for about 10-13 minutes. For short winter swims, I wear a lightweight long-sleeved wetsuit as it’s important to protect your arms in cold water.

Sea swimming has become so central to my life that I’m now a qualified open-water swimming coach. Last summer, I helped two friends go from swimming head-up breaststroke to one mile front crawl. Seeing their joy in achieving that has been incredible.

As a 42-year-old mum, I need every bit of energy I can muster. Swimming in the sea gives me that – I get a lasting joy from it, as well as a sense of peace. I feel healthier from

my daily swims and I know I’m more resilient as a result.’

Follow Ella on Instagram – @wildedgeswimmingcornwall

PROTECT YOURSELF

To protect vital organs in the core, the body restricts blood flow to the limbs when in cold water. If this reaches extreme levels, the arms and legs no longer function properly and you can’t swim. If you feel yourself slowing down or struggling to swim, get out of the water.

➔ **Head to [outdoorswimmer.com/open-water-safety](https://www.outdoorswimmer.com/open-water-safety) for information and guidance.**

womanandhome.com 87

WORDS: JO WILLACY; PHOTOS (POSED BY MODEL): GETTY