



Advocate: Laura Daly
Age: 23
Province: Connacht
Club: Challenge Cycling Club
Discipline: Road Cycling

What age did you get involved? I was cycling from a very early age, competing in triathlons at 10 years old. However only joined a cycling club in July 2019.

Why did you start cycling? Cycling has always been part of my life whether it was for exercise at a young age or transportation to work as a teenager. During training for an Ironman, I found the cycling aspect extremely challenging and really wanted to improve that particular discipline. My coach, Chris Simpson, and I decided that it might be good to join a cycling club for improving my cycling but also for the social aspect with like-minded people.

What has been your involvement in cycling, your story? Since joining a cycling club, I haven't looked back! From the get go, I was welcomed into the club, informed of training sessions and added into the WhatsApp chat. Instantly I felt excited about cycling again, a feeling I had lost through individual training for years. It was definitely a struggle for the first few session's but I was amazed at how quick I got used to the spins. Non-stop chatter within the group definitely helps push you on! I entered my first cycling only sportive in September, organised by the club which was amazing. My first public fall while clipped in moment! Tough race but really enjoyable! Continuing on throughout the colder months it definitely was a great motivation for those Sunday mornings where the bed was way more appealing! Currently with the worldwide pandemic the indoor trainer is my new best friend but knowing the whole club is doing the exact same is comforting and motivating!

Do you have a quote that you live by or inspires you? 'If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you' – Fred DeVito

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What is your favourite thing about cycling? It gets you outdoors to exercise and socialise! You can see a lot more on a bike than you would driving past in a car. Cycling up hills would not be my most favourite aspect but the descent that comes after is thrilling! When out on a cycle, for safety you have to keep focus on the present and your surroundings, takes the mind off day to day stresses. You definitely come home with a clear happy head!

What have been your cycling highlights? Definitely the first cycling sportive I entered where I surprised myself at my own abilities but also how fun and enjoyable it was! I was in Manchester for a strength and conditioning course so decided to take a trip to the velodrome. It was amazing to cycle in the National Cycling Centre, the first British indoor Olympic cycling track.

How do you feel cycling has benefitted you? Made new friends, increased level of fitness, races to look forward to and fancy new gear are all but a few benefits! I can already see myself developing as a cycling athlete and I am very excited about the doors that have opened for me as a result. I train hard and love it something that you don't need to say, you can just see on the face especially on those hill sets! It has allowed me to gain a lot more practical knowledge which marries greatly with all the theory I learned through my Master's at University. Sport and exercise are fundamentally key to my day to day living and cannot imagine my day without training. It sets you up for the day, clear head and happy hormones.



What would you say to other females who may be interested in cycling? Contact a club or even start off with friends and just get on your bike! And if you don't have a bike, any club or advocates like me would be more than happy to help in getting you started. The hardest part is taking that step, once you have begun you will be hooked. Cycling is a very sociable sport which I didn't even realise! Chats during spins and coffee stops, organised member events both racing and social and then the members willingness to help each other.

How do you feel about becoming a Bike Like Me Advocate? Having just started out in a cycling club, I can really see the difference in the participation between men and women. Cycling is fantastic, enjoyable, sociable and an amazing way of keeping fit, if this was conveyed to women by women, I have no doubt this ratio of men to women would level out. I am ecstatic to be one of the people trying to help women feel more comfortable joining the sport and hopefully I will be able to show them the benefits I have got from cycling.

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'To promote cycling as an accessible and enjoyable pursuit, where every cyclist may participate and develop to their full potential'

