



# Sam's Journey

with Magna Vitae

**'Three Days:  
Three Exercise Classes.'**  
*an experience written by our  
customer, Sam, in her own words:*

“ Before this week, the extent of my attempts at group leisure activities was one aborted attempt to join the Brownies at the age of 8 where I forced myself through one meeting – of which I can remember nothing other than a mounting sense of horror and disdain at the sight of the other girls' sickly yellow and brown uniforms – before bolting home and refusing to ever go back.

Even when I was last a member of the gym, I didn't foray into the world of exercise classes, preferring to stick to the relative safety of my solitary treadmill runs in peace. I'll be the first to admit that I'm not much of a team player: I hated group assignments at university, I tend to work much better alone, and *I have a habit of instantly clamming up with paralytic brain-freeze if I feel like somebody is watching me do something...* In short: this 3-day bender of exercise classes was going to be **challenging** to me in more ways than one! So, *how did it go?!* ”

*Well, I'm about to tell you...*



# Sam's Journey with Magna Vitae


'Three Days: Three Exercise Classes.' Day One: **AquaFit.**

*an experience written by our customer, Sam, in her own words:*

“ I'd been so keen to get back in the water as I adore the idea of swimming but in practice I'm a pretty weak swimmer and tend to just flail around and jerk my arms and legs spasmodically as if somebody's just thrown a toaster into the pool, so *I have all the enthusiasm - with none of the skill...*

With this in mind, I thought **a water-based class would be the best start at helping me to gain some confidence in the pool**, so I puzzled for a while over what the relative differences might be between the two options on offer (*Aquacise or AquaFit - I'm still none the wiser but I'll let you all know in due course!*) and plumped for the one that worked best around my work schedule. I did manage to rope a friend into joining me but she couldn't make it in the end. I had three hours before the class in which to drum up some interest/beg for an alternative supporter, but no cigar so off I went to brave it alone!

## First source of anxiety: exposure.

Obviously swimming necessitates a certain degree of part-nudity which can be daunting for anyone, regardless of body size/shape, age, ability etc - we all have hang-ups. For me *personally*, I've been not-so-blessed with gender-confused hair follicles that sprout thick black hairs wherever they please with reckless abandon so my first mission was to undertake the gruelling task of a full-body shave which left me sleeker and smoother than a baby dolphin but also left me exhausted before I'd even started. (NB: *It would be remiss of me not to say that nobody HAS to shave and all bodies are beautiful just as they are - I'm exclusively talking about my own anxieties and preferences here.*) Once the new, hairless me finally made it to the pool, it was game on! In defiance of the Baltic January temperature, I parted company with my big woolly jumper in one quick, fluid motion - a bit like ripping a plaster off - & headed to  the pool, shivering a little, half-wishing I'd kept the extra layer of body hair for warmth...



AquaFit



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'Three Days: Three Exercise Classes.' Day One: **AquaFit.**  
*an experience written by our customer, Sam, in her own words:*

“

To my delight, I spotted a familiar face across the changing room: my dear friend and colleague, Katie. “KATIE!!!” I cried a little too ebulliently, as if I was the lone survivor of a sea-wreck on a desert island, catching sight of a fellow human being after a fortnight of living off ants and tree bark...

I wasted no time in ingratiating myself among her family group which was a good job, as I had to borrow a pound coin from her lovely mum (*because heaven forbid I should come fully prepared for ANYTHING EVER*).

Right, I've waffled enough: **the class!**

As if transpired, AquaFit involves standing fairly spaced-apart in the pool, clutching a floaty-weight in each fist (*yes, I'm definitely sure that floaty-weight is the correct terminology...ahem*), while a firm but friendly instructor yells ever more-difficult-to-meet instructions at you from the sidelines to a soundtrack of Pump Up The Jam. We started off quite tame: a steady march. “Pfft, this is easy!” I thought to myself, foolishly as it soon transpired. Soon, we were jumping every single variation of a jump you can think of (high, box, star to name but a few), lunging, kicking, contorting, stretching and, worst/best of all, sprinting. These sprints got *longer and longer* as the session wore on, with no let-up from our instructor other than an encouraging reminder that we'd “only” got however many seconds left when we looked in danger of imminent collapse. Thankfully, there weren't any mirrors in sight but I fancied I probably resembled a sweaty, constipated Sonic the Hedgehog. All in all, it felt like being in the Army but wetter. But **what a good laugh! I felt genuinely exhilarated by the time we'd finished and really excited for next week.** And perhaps a more leisurely swim in the meantime!

AquaFit

# Sam's Journey *with Magna Vitae*

'Three Days: Three Exercise Classes.' Day Two: **Yoga.**  
*an experience written by our customer, Sam, in her own words:*

“ After the frenzied sprints and jumping around like a loon the night before, I thought Yoga would be a much more calm affair and I've always fancied the idea of Yoga - so I was nervous but excited to give it a go!

Indeed, far from the booming dance music of Aquafit, Yoga was accompanied by the lilting sounds of nature (babbling brooks and what-have-you) with the obligatory occasional whale noises. All very “*give peace a chance*”.

Unfortunately, our charmingly eccentric instructor was not about to give my muscles a chance at peace, as she soon had us stretching our bodies to the very limits of endurance – *it was definitely much harder work than I'd expected!* All that sun-greeting and downward-dogging (*probably a better way to phrase that, in hindsight*) was so rewarding though – I felt as if I'd had a tough but much-needed massage! Apart from the stretches, we also did a few balancing exercises.

Well, we learn something new about ourselves every day and *it turns out my balance is absolutely atrocious...* I definitely wasn't a flamingo in a former life, let's put it that way: I was wobbling and stumbling around worse than Mr Bobby after a pub crawl!

The best bit by far was when we all got to have a little lie-down at the end with firm instructions not to think about anything. Well, when you're mentally ill that's a bit like telling the tide to stop coming in but I gave it my best shot, and probably could have nodded off if I hadn't been growing a little chilly – turns out you cool down pretty rapidly after the thirsty work of trying to touch your own toes and failing. ”

***Really relaxing, really fun, and a bigger challenge than I expected! I'll be back next week!***

Yoga





# Sam's Journey with Magna Vitae

'Three Days: Three Exercise Classes.' Day Three: **Legs, Bums & Tums**  
*an experience written by our customer, Sam, in her own words:*

“As the name of this class is pretty self-explanatory I felt as if I sort-of knew what to expect with this one, but that did nothing to ease the anxiety because **I'd never done a squat in my life - unless picking my JustEats order off the doorstep counts...** Rather exciting start to the class as the lovely instructor recognised me as “the one who does the blogs”! I felt like Kim Kardashian!

This little ego-rush was not to last, however, as I was **NOT** prepared for the gruelling work-out ahead of me! It quickly became apparent that I'm not quite as fit and flexible as I believed as even the warm-up proved challenging: when were asked to “open the gate” (swing your leg round-about as though you are literally closing a gate with your leg), there was an almighty crack like a gunshot from my knee that made the lady next to me wince, never mind me! Suitably warmed-up (*prematurely sweating in my case*), the workout proper could now begin. There were various mats dotted about the room, each denoting a certain activity. The idea was to choose a mat, do the activity for a short burst of time and then move on to the next one: basically, it was a conveyer belt of strenuous exercise. I have a mind like a sieve so all instructions were in one ear and out the other so I spent the first round the merry-go-round of light torture fervently spying on the person next to me so I didn't make a total fool of myself when it was my turn. *Eventually, I got the hang of it and even proved surprisingly adept at squats!* My personal favourite was the one where you simply gallop madly from one end of the room to the other like a demented pony.

At the end of the session, we did a mad rush of squats-planks-squats-planks that left me beetroot-red and grunting with giddy exertion: it was all rather thrilling! **Definitely the hardest class of the three but also definitely my favourite!** All in all, I didn't feel like I'd done too badly for a beginner... until the next day. Friends, I was in PAIN. I was walking like a penguin with the runs for the whole weekend and I still feel a bit stiff! *I've been assured that it gets easier.* ”

**Will report back on that one...**

