

Straight from the Horse's Mouth

Jodie Fulton talks horses and how they help her to relax and switch off

I love what I do. I work for Elaine Halley at Cherrybank Dental Spa Perth and I can truly say I landed the job I have always wanted. Work can be all-consuming, however—just as it can be for all of us.

I'm sure many can relate to waking in the night thinking about treatment, or lying in bed until the 'silly hours' thinking about something that maybe didn't go exactly the way you would have liked. Thankfully, seven years ago, I found what would become my therapy: eventing.

Horses are incredibly therapeutic for me, and have been my entire life. My mum taught me and my two brothers to ride as children, and it was a love that has lasted a lifetime.

I love everything about them—from just spending time with them and the noises they make when they see you to hacking, competing and even mucking out! Nothing relaxes me more than a summer's evening spent hacking through fields or a quick gallop up the stubble fields on a cold autumnal day.

I currently have three horses—Clover, Oliver and Roo. I bought Clover, an 11-year-old Irish sports horse, six years ago and it's entirely her fault that I adore eventing as much as I do!



Photos: Dave Cameron Photography

We've come up through the levels together and have competed at international level, including placing ninth in the national championships of all eventing combinations in the UK. She is a legend, a complete joy to be around, and I attribute the relaxation I feel around horses to her.

Oliver is a super horse that belongs to a very good friend of mine. He is with me to compete this season and we are getting to know each other. He is 13 years old, loves his job and is a gent in every way possible.

Roo is the latest addition to my little squad. She is a young horse and is learning the ropes; I can only hope she learns all the tricks of the trade from the older two. She has big shoes to fill.

We are incredibly fortunate to have three wonderful sponsors: Dave Cameron Photography (credited with the photographs in this article); Apt Cavalier Ltd.; and Horse Riding with Confidence Scotland. All three form part of our big team and we are grateful for their support and guidance.

The horses also have a bigger team of farriers, physiotherapists and instructors who keep them in the best shape and both of us performing at our best.

Sometimes the hardest balance with three horses is when you have a serious competition coming up and the preparation time is more



significant than when it's off-season.

This summer, in a six-week period, Clover and I were preparing for three big competitions: Gatcombe Championships, Burgham International and Blair Castle International Horse Trials.

Cherrybank are incredibly understanding and appreciate my desire to event and the

need for annual leave based around the eventing season. I work four days and this allows enough time for all the preparation required.

Next season already involves multiple international competitions, including a trip to the south of Ireland. In my life, my horses' needs come before mine.

Often your time, time with loved ones, money and energy levels become the sacrifice. But if you want to make it work, the sacrifices are 100 percent worth it.

I think getting the correct balance and a large dose of perspective is incredibly important in a high-pressure profession like ours, when so many are struggling with stress and other mental health issues.

Having something—whatever it may be—that allows you to relax and switch off ... that can only be a good thing.

Thankfully for me, I have found that escapism with a workplace that supports and encourages it. ■

