

Ménière's Journey



I first began to get Ménière's symptoms when I was approx 18/19 years old. I had never heard of the disease and so brushed off the nausea and vertigo as being overly tired, or because I hadn't eaten, or just a general illness etc. It was only when these symptoms began to get more frequent and worse in their outcome that I knew something was wrong.

A colleague who had Meniere's disease recognised the traits, and pointed me in the direction of Ménière's and Vestibular UK (Ménière's Society at the time), as well as for diagnosis from my GP, then onward to an ENT specialist at UCLH a few months later. I was diagnosed with Ménière's Disease around age 23. I was fortunate that the symptoms of nausea, vertigo were not persistent and came and went in waves. I soon got used to the telltale signs of when a wave of attacks were coming. As with most, I tried a reduction in sodium, as well as caffeine to no effect. My attacks were not frequent enough to deem steroid injections into the eardrum necessary.

I continued like this for a few years, until my attacks began to decrease in frequency and intensity, but yet found my hearing worsening. A few missed appointments, and telephone appointments with ENT over Covid meant a delay in actually getting seen, and meant any possibility of saving my hearing was lost. And that's where I am now. I have learned to live with a hearing aid, with the usual struggles of ear infections, ruptured eardrums, and distortion in loud/ busy environments. Relatively speaking, I'm lucky I still have one perfectly functioning ear.

Training for the Marathon

This time last year the furthest I had ever run was about 5km. I am not a runner by any means, yet I have always wanted to do the London Marathon. Over the last year I have been building up distances with planned events starting with a 10km event in August, a half Marathon in December, and now the London Marathon. Marathon Training started a little slow, a pulled groin in the lead up to the Half Marathon, led to a grade 2 tear in my adductor tendon. A few physio sessions later and a precarious start to my training plan, I was underway!

Training has been mostly good, I have been following a training plan set out by the Coopah app. I've been hitting the weekly milestones set out in the app, as well as learning about the importance of nutrition and stretching... or lack of! The longer runs are getting harder, as expected, with this last week at 19km. This Friday I'm moving past the Half Marathon distance at 24km (15miles). The longer runs have been made easier with a friend who has joined me for a few. Having someone to talk to, push you and take the pressure of organising routes etc. really does help. As hard as these long runs are there is still some enjoyment during them, and a sense of reward after. I still have the constant niggle of the groin injury. One or two sessions cut short or missed because of it, but I've

been listening to the physio, and what my body is telling me to keep going in the right direction.

The Run for Ryan event went really well. The run was a 5km circuit around central London, so I incorporated this into my training. Three times circuits and getting lost a few times on route got me to my target of 19km. Tomorrow, 24km will be my longest run ever!

