

So Sasha

Roadblocks forced *Sasha Exeter* to forge a new path.
She's never looked back. | by *Melissa Greer*

WHEN A HEALTH CRISIS SIDELINED SASHA EXETER in her late 20s, the former athlete essentially lost her identity. In the following years, while dealing with deteriorating health, Sasha also ended her engagement and left her corporate career. To cope, she founded SoSasha.com, a lifestyle blog that has catapulted her onto the wellness scene. "I find that sometimes the best discoveries and opportunities arise when you're at your lowest low," she tells us on the set of our May cover shoot. Between photo takes, she chatted about her journey thus far.

You've shared your health struggles with fibromyalgia and kidney disease. When did you realize you needed to make a change in your lifestyle?

I had literally hit rock bottom. I listened to my treating physicians and did everything they said and I really wasn't seeing any improvement in my health. As a very

fit and active individual, being on bedrest for over a year and not really being able to be mobile was terrifying. One day, I just woke up thinking enough is enough; I have to take this into my own hands. I dumped every doctor I had and built a new team. I started doing reiki and acupuncture, saw a nutritionist, changed my diet and slowly started to wean myself off all the medications. I also got weekly treatments from a naturopath, migraine and pain specialist and chiropractor. It wasn't until then that I started to see a difference.

What motivated you to get healthy?

I wanted my life back – I hadn't reached my potential. I'm a high-performing individual and I'm very competitive. I felt like I was throwing in the towel too early, and I wasn't OK with that.

Do you still have bad days, and how do you tackle them?

I'm challenged every day. I'm still in pain. I guess it's my new normal. Some days it's very hard to get out of bed, but other days I feel pretty good. It's more manageable when I'm active. Now, I enjoy hiking, yoga, running, cycling and cross training.

What are your tips for others in similar situations?

Never give up. It's never going to be easy, but you have to find that one thing you enjoy. When it comes to fitness, if you don't like what you're doing, you're not going to continue to do it. Of course, with some illnesses, you need to call in the big guns – meaning medication – when absolutely necessary, but knowing how to manage your condition through diet and exercise is important.

When you left your corporate career, you mentioned that you had grown tired of searching for happiness in a paycheck. How do you define happiness today?

I actually know what it is now. Today, happiness is shutting down at 7:30 p.m., having a proper dinner with my partner (at the table) and talking about our day, without the television. It's taking a walk along the water with our dog. It's having a good work-life balance and being healthy – all the little things I used to take for granted. *hr*

SASHA'S THOUGHTS on EXERCISE

MORNING OR NIGHT?

MORNING.

INDOORS OR OUT?

OUTDOORS.

YOGA OR PILATES?

YOGA.

SOLO OR GROUP?

SOLO (MOSTLY).

SQUATS OR SIT-UPS?

SIT-UPS.



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