

The Marchathon Step Challenge

'My Marchathon' Story

I am an ICU nurse in Cork University Hospital. Since March 2020 I'm one of those who've been battling Covid 19 in and out of work and to be honest I was starting to get burned out. The days are all the same and with the lockdown always up, it's really hard to find things that can divert my attention away from the pandemic. One of my colleagues asked me if I want to join a team that's she's been setting up to join the Marchathon. I've been walking in and off duty my free days so I said why not? It's not like I'm going to travel anywhere anytime soon anyway. Another factor that pushed me to join is for my headspace. I need to get out of the hospital, get out of my house and get some fresh air.

In the beginning my goal was to get 10,000 steps per day. It's an easy goal when I'm working but if it's my off I barely get to 3000 steps. Now I'm making an average of 20,000 steps per day with or without work. I make it a point that I also encourage my friends to come join me during the walks. I have gotten so close to one of my teammates as we go for walks almost every day and explore parts of Cork that we've never been to before (within the 5km radius of course). I started to feel positive and thankful for the fact that I can walk, I have a job and I am not sick despite the fact that I breathe the virus every time I got to work. It was a very positive experience for me.

Yesterday I went for a walk with friends and our goal was to reach 20km with 30,000 steps. We walked despite the rain and the sore legs. We finished the goal and we're delighted of ourselves. If there's anything that this experience has taught me it's the fact that taking a walk is free and fun so we have to take advantage of it. Now I always finish my goals in my watch and I don't sleep without going for a walk, May it be short or long. I also became more aware of my activity and the calories that I'm losing whenever I go and move.

In the end, it was an amazing experience for me. I remember friends coming to me and complaining that they're burned out or depress and looking back at myself thanking the universe because I don't feel the same. I am very thankful that Marchathon gave me my much needed will to continue by diverting my energy and attention to walking and achieving goals, by making me focus on talks with friends while doing it and by opening my eyes to the beauty that is just around me. Cork is a fantastic city with the warmest people if you really look closely. I'm so happy to be here.

- Cathrine Jane Dequito, Cork University Hospital