

Gulf 4 Good Peru challenge

IN THE LAST OF HER COLUMNS, RADIO HOST SUZANNE RADFORD RECOUNTS HER ADVENTURES TREKKING THE ALTERNATIVE INCA TRAIL

ALL THE TRAINING PAID OFF AND I COMPLETED THE 5-DAY TREK IN PERU WITH GULF FOR GOOD, following the alternative Inca Trail to the lost city of Machu Picchu. The experience was incredible trekking for six to eight hours each day at high altitude with the most breathtaking scenery. Before the trek fellow challengers (26 of us) and I had a couple of days to acclimatize at 3,300 feet in The Andean city of Cusco. I struggled with the low oxygen and high altitude and often felt nauseated, light headed and overwhelmingly fatigued. That said, lots of water, rest and some electro light mineral powders helped me feel well enough to tackle the trail.

On the toughest day we reached the highest point at 4,400m. I took it steadily and concentrated on my breathing and found my trekking poles really helped in climbing the steep parts and supporting the knees. They also kept my hands from swelling and gave me better balance.

All the strength training, cardio and yoga allowed me to manage to keep up with the leading group.

There is not a lot of time for contemplation as you are constantly moving forward and thinking about your body and taking care of any pain, blisters, being too hot or cold and replenishing consistently with water and snacks to keep optimal energy levels.

This experience will stay with me a lifetime: the clean air, being close to nature, walking in the mountains with my head in the clouds, not to mention the amazing night skies.

Since coming back I'm pleased to say I have lost a few kilos; my legs are strong and arms toned. My lung capacity is better so the feeling of strength and wellbeing will stay with me as I search for my next 'keep fit and healthy' challenge.

Suzanne Radford presents *Dubai Today on Dubai Eye 103.8, dubaieye1038.com.* More info on Gulf 4 Good: gulf4good.org.



Q+A



BERNADETTE ABRAHAM
FITNESS TRAINER

I'm really out of shape after the summer and would like to start training for my first 10K race in November. Where should I start and what do I need?—CAROL, VIA EMAIL



DEAR CAROL: If you don't have any underlying medical issues that require a physician's consent, it's a good idea to start training now because it takes about eight weeks to go from out of shape to 10K form. For your first race, all you really need is a comfortable pair of running shoes and the right state of mind. Instead of focusing on finishing times, enjoy the training process and

the experience of crossing that finish line for the first time.

As far as 10K training goes, there are many free 8-week training schedules online that help build endurance gradually. Most of them recommend running four to five days per week, and also encourage cross training activities to prevent overuse injuries and boredom. You can also look at joining a running club or train with a friend for extra support and guidance.

Then all you have to do is get your trainers on and get running! It's really as simple as that.