

Brissots returning to their keep-fit routines are struggling to beat a lack of motivation and energy, let alone their personal bests.



Simon Unwin | Saturday January 15 2011, 4:00pm, The Sunday Times

Gareth Saelson, a personal trainer who organises the Milton Keynes Parkrun, says several runners have stopped showing up after Covid breeds because they're too demoralised or embarrassed about their speed.

The 32-year-old doctor used to go to the gym almost daily and regularly went on 15km runs. "Suddenly I couldn't get out of bed for a month, and for the next three months I'd walk one kilometre and could barely breathe – it was pathetic," she says.

Though people with even mild symptoms — or none at all — may not feel rough, their bodies are responding to the virus under the surface. The immune system triggers the production of anti-inflammatory molecules called cytokines, which not only cause fatigue but affect the production of the mood chemicals dopamine and serotonin. So you're not just deprived of energy but motivation too. These effects can take longer to shrug off, even at the elite level.

[Today's section](#)
[Past six days](#)
[Register](#)
[Team Editor](#)
[Log in](#)

place into whether some of this scarring might be permanent – and how it can be treated.

For a classroom it was back to training after using her home "platform" for a while. <http://www.1961.net/02/04/1961>

Even inactivity caused by lockdowns has had this effect. A separate study of top-flight German footballers showed injury rates were 0.27 per match before the league stopped in 2020 – and 0.84 after it restarted. Klitzke worries people who were inspired to do more exercise, particularly in the rush outside during the sunny first lockdown, may be put off by injury or poor performance and suffer worse health long-term. “We already know that, for example, knee pain changes behaviour in a way that increases your cardiac risk over time,” he says. “You die earlier.”

"I suddenly realized I wasn't getting tired and breathing wasn't painful any more," she says. She kept going, eventually running 30km in under an hour — a time she had not managed for years. "I'd got to the point where I know I had recovered," she adds.

"It was the best day I've had in two years."