



How Louise stayed active with table tennis

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The types of sport and physical activity people participate in change over the course of their lives, with factors such as age, mobility and injuries playing a role in which activities people are able to take part in.

After playing squash for years, Louise found it too strenuous to continue due to a couple of injuries, but she's found her new sport in table tennis.

Louise is 61 years old, lives in Cambridge and works part-time. She has a history of playing lots of sports, particularly squash. However after suffering from a sports injury to her arm and knee, Louise needed to find a new activity so she could maintain her activity levels;

She said: "I stopped playing squash because it was too strenuous. I did a bit of walking, but I've got sore knees, so I thought 'table tennis will be my thing'. I can play table tennis at a less aggressive level and I'm beginning to play more and more!"

Louise started playing table tennis in 2017 at her local U3A group and has been playing at the Ping Pong Parlour in The Grafton Centre, Cambridge, since its opening in September 2018. Louise also attends a weekly over-50s Bat and Chat session, which is facilitated by an Activator role at Cambridge City Council, funded by Table Tennis England through the Ping project in Cambridge.

The convenience of the Ping Pong Parlour has allowed Louise to play table tennis on a regular basis when it's suitable for her – and within pandemic restrictions.

She said: "It's right on my doorstep. I can cycle here, I can shop . . . I've got to the stage where I don't leave home to go shopping without taking my bat with me. Even though I go to the Parlour on my own, there's always someone around for a game."

As a result of taking up table tennis, Louise has been able to maintain her physical activity levels. She added: "I thought it would be a gentle, social game, but I've been bitten by the bug. The more I play here, the less I need to think of going to the gym, because table tennis has become a kind of work out. I can spend a few hours here, so

it's replaced some more boring activities – this is much more fun!”

Louise's participation in social table tennis at her U3A group and the Ping Pong Parlour has inspired her to develop her game and move into more competitive play.

“It's given me a more serious hobby than I thought it was going to be. I've now joined a club and I've playing in some matches,” she said.

Louise has recently played in a handicap match with her club and is thinking of getting some coaching to improve her game and develop her skills for her competitive game.

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