



Ambassador

Alex Rotas - Photographer



Alex Rotas took up photography in her 60s and for the last six years has been photographing men and women in the 60 through 100-year-old age groups, who still compete in the sport they love.

She has exhibited nationally and internationally, and her photos have featured on the BBC national website and in numerous other online and print publications both in the UK and abroad. She has won awards for changing popular perceptions of the ageing body and for challenging the idea that competitive sport is a domain belonging to young people.

Inspired by the people she photographs, she took up running three years ago aged 65 and is currently an ambassador for England Athletics' Run Together campaign.

Why I'm proud to be an ambassador for Active Ageing (Bristol)

I'm really thrilled to be an ambassador for Active Ageing (Bristol). This new initiative presses all the buttons I believe in.

Obviously, I'm passionate about encouraging older people to be as active as they possibly can. My work photographing elite competitive athletes in their 70s, 80s and 90s has made me very aware of how much of a myth it is



that physical frailty and limitations are inevitable as we get older. And yet this preconception is so dominant in our culture. We can all do so much more than we might think we can as we age. If I can help challenge this myth through my work, then I'm delighted.



Older elite sportsmen and women may be one group of unsung heroes and heroines whose achievements deserve to be flagged up in the public domain, but there are so many others too. Bristol is a city with many local stars. Increasingly, as I photograph local, grass-roots groups of older people exercising, whether they have never exercised before and are struggling with mobility issues, or regulars at a local class, or indeed long-term experts and enthusiasts for their sport, I'm struck and moved by the individual stories that I hear.

There are the exercise and sports instructors, often in their 60s (or older) themselves who are extraordinary role-models as well as being dedicated, inspiring teachers. And then there are the people who sign up and turn up at the groups and the classes. These are the ones who are willing to push themselves out of their comfort-zone and really reconsider and reframe what they thought they could and should do as they get older. Their determination and courage is also heroic - especially if they are new to exercise, or indeed have other constraining health issues. It's an equal privilege for me to photograph these individuals and classes as it is for me to photograph world-class events.

So, I'm delighted to be part of an initiative that encourages activity at every level in the city that I love and that is my home. I'm absolutely super-proud to be an ambassador of Active Ageing (Bristol).

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