

## The Holt Bolt! !

A little while ago I signed up to do the Holt Bolt with a few team members from Carpe Diem - there was Juanita, Marilyn, Deb and Chris. The Holt Bolt is an 8km course with around 30 obstacles...

Now I have always wanted to do an obstacle course style fun run - but being a bigger girl, I thought I would have to wait until I was thinner and fitter, but decided to give it a go anyway - the ultimate challenge!! !

Leading up to the Holt Bolt I was a bundle of nerves - all I could think of was what if I can't do it, or what if someone has to push my fat arse up a mud hill, so embarrassing! I told myself all I had to do was give each obstacle a go - that's all, just try, and that's exactly what I did!!

On the day I found Juanita with relief and shortly after the others joined in - I bought myself a Holt Bolt singlet - a men's size, cause I can't yet fit into the smaller ladies sized. We all decorated ourselves in zinc and were pumped and ready to go; I was so excited at this point!! I was watching all these weary people finishing the last obstacle and they didn't look like they had died! A lot of them were even running and sliding on the last water slide!!

The first obstacle terrified me - climbing over a 2.5m wall, I had to have two people push me up - but somehow I got up and over the bloody thing, with a bit of dignity intact, the next lot of obstacles led me into a false sense of security, dragging tyres, crawling through mud, going through a drain - pft I got this :) Then came the first lot of cargo nets...have I ever mentioned that I have a massive, massive fear of heights, to the point I can't stand on a chair without getting the shakes, my first thought was 'nup I can't do this' but the team new I could and told me so, so with their encouragement I made it up and over, it was really scary for me to do that - especially trying to throw my leg over to the other side for the decent down.!

I won't go through every obstacle - because to be honest I don't remember all of them, I will go through the ones I do remember, which were the harder ones for me to overcome, and one of them was the traverse, there were two difference kinds, one where you had to walk on a chain across a dam holding a rope over your head, this one was pretty scary, I had this horrifying thought that I would slip and land legs either side of the chain - ouch, but shakily and slowly, I actually made it across, I had the biggest sense of relief and pride when I did make it across and my team congratulated me and seemed genuinely proud I had made it!! The next traverse was a possum crawl type one, the rope goes from one side of the dam to the other and you hand on upside down with your hands and feet and possum crawl across - I knew straight up I would be able to do it, but thankfully my team made me at least get up there and give it ago, I'm not upset I didn't do it, just glad I gave it a go. The next obstacle I really enjoyed - it was climbing through trenches with a 15kilo bag, I think I really like it because it was just physically challenging there was no mental challenge and I knew I could do it. We had heaps more cargo nets to go up and over and each one I could feel myself getting more and more confident with them - not confident enough that I was zipping up and over but confident enough that I knew I could do it.!! !

One of the biggest challenges that came up for me was the mud hills - wet, slippery clay like muddy hills we had to climb up - 3 of them... When I started on the first one - I had in my head there was no way I was going to complete this challenge, it was hard, I'm 105 kilograms, dragging that up a

slippery muddy hill is bloody hard, I had to have people pushing my arse up and people up top pulling me - and I kept slipping back down, I felt so awkward - I was frustrated and close to tears, I felt like I was holding everyone up and just wanted to throw in the towel, but Juanita, Marilyn, Deb and Chris weren't having a bar of that and I somehow managed to drag myself up there only to have to slide back down again and do it another two times on two more muddy hills. That one really shattered me and when I was done I was exhausted emotionally as well as physically, I had also landed hard on my tailbone on a muddy bump coming down, and it was killing me, like take your breath away killing me. But never the less I still had a course to complete so off we trotted for some more cargo net climbing - by this point while a part of me was like 'oh my gosh look at me go' but there was also a small part that wanted to give up, it hurt, it was scary and it never seemed to end!!

If it wasn't for my team I would probably still be in a heap. Another challenge that came up for me was climbing in and out of a skip bin. Being 105 kilos - my body ain't built for this kinda thing, I was covered in slippery mud, my shoes were caked and slippery and the ledge to get up on was tiny! I had Chris heave me up, and I'm straddling the skip bin one leg on either side of the ledge and all of a sudden I freeze, I don't know what happen but I just started panicking, I didn't know how to get down, I can't breathe, the tears and snot is flowing, I feel dizzy and I can feel everyone looking at me, I had done scarier stuff than this not long earlier, but I think it was a combination of being mentally and physically drained (let's face it most of these obstacles took a lot of mental strength for me as well as physical) - Chris and another racer jumped into the skip bin and helped a hysterical me down and out of the bloody thing, and the rest of the racers clapped for me - I look back now and feel a bit embarrassed :( But at the end of the day I still did it, I still climbed in and out of the skip bin... We still had a few more obstacles to go - so off we go more cargo nets, more heights, more climbing - one of the scary ones was a big wooden fort, I chose to use the rope and climb myself up a wooden ramp/slide thing, it was again hard, and I think I felt someone behind me - gently holding my back, I'm not sure who it was, I was so focused on not falling flat on my face, but their presence made me feel more comfortable...

Our very last obstacle was a storage container with a wooden ladder up one side and you guessed it - a cargo net going down the other, it wasn't so bad, still terrifying sitting on top of the storage container trying to get the confidence to climb onto the netting, but again with my awesome team I somehow managed it!! ! We jogged the very last bit together, my jog was so slow and shuffely but it's all I could manage and I attempted to slide the very last water slide - but I sort of winded myself by splatting straight onto my belly and chest!

It was such a relief to finally finish my first course! I was so incredibly proud of myself that I had faced (definitely not conquered) but faced so many of my fears, I learnt that I can do more than I give myself credit for and that with my awesome team behind me - anything is possible! The sense of camaraderie was amazing not only from our team helping each other out but people from the other teams stopping to help everyone out as well!!

I look forward to doing the next Holt Bolt, hopefully by then I will be fitter, faster and stronger and of course less awkward!! !