



Sophie takes in the scenery on the Alpine Coast to Coast



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# 'If you open yourself up to the world, the world will open itself up to you'

Adventurer **Sophie Radcliffe** talks getting cold, wet, dirty and sweaty in the name of exploration

**E**ver fancied climbing a mountain, taking on an epic cycle ride or challenging yourself with an Ironman? If you're looking for inspiration to get up and out there, look no further than Sophie Radcliffe. With an insatiable appetite for adventure, she's our kind of girl!

## How did you get into adventure sports?

I was 23 (I am now 29) when I decided that I wanted to try something new, get fit and challenge myself. I signed up for a week-long adventure race through the jungle of Borneo and that was it, I was hooked!

## What's the best bit?

The way they change you as a person. You don't know who you

are going to become and I love that. I believe that if you open yourself up to the world, the world will open itself up to you and amazing things will happen.

## What's the toughest bit?

The discomfort. It's not all high fives on top of mountains! You're cold, wet, hungry, dirty, sweaty and tired – often very tired. On the last two days of the Alpine Coast to Coast I had 370km to cycle from the Italian Alps down to the coast of Monaco. I wanted to make it there within one month from the date I started the challenge, so I had no time to waste. I cycled 255km until 2am, slept on the floor of an empty car park for three hours, woke up and finished the last 115kms to arrive in Monaco by 3pm.

## Best challenge yet?

The Alpine Coast to Coast. It was a world-first expedition to cycle the length of the Alps and climb the highest mountains in each of the eight Alpine countries. I covered 45,530 metres of ascent, and cycled 1,669km with 141km on foot over the mountains. I learnt how to keep going day after day when I felt I had nothing left in the tank.

## Tell us about the Ironman...

I can't describe how much it hurts. Every part of your being screams at you to stop. Including your brain, which says 'so after the 2.4-mile swim and the 112-mile bike ride, you want me to run a whaaat?' It's inconceivable to many people that you could run a marathon after that!

## What does training involve?

Lots of chocolate and drinking beer! After training of course... I love kettlebells, cycling and climbing. I also focus on building confidence and mental strength.

## Have you always been sporty?

Not really. I went to a small school in central London where there were no playing fields, so sport was limited. I always loved participating, but I was never any good at it! I completed my first three-mile run when I was 14 – afterwards I couldn't breathe and was vomiting – it felt like the biggest mountain in the world!

## What's the best place you've travelled?

The Alps. I've changed my life considerably in the last few years so I can spend more time in the mountains. I feel incredibly lucky, but it's taken years to get here. I'm fascinated by the parallels between challenging yourself through adventure sports and life. My challenges have helped me become more comfortable with taking risks and not being afraid of failure, which means I put myself out there and go for opportunities that I wouldn't have in the past.

## GET INVOLVED

Follow Sophie's adventures at [challengesophie.com](http://challengesophie.com) or start your own at [discoveradventure.com](http://discoveradventure.com). Sophie wore the adidas supernova cycling range for the entirety of the cycling stages on the Alpine Coast to Coast, available from [adidasicycling.co.uk](http://adidasicycling.co.uk).

## Fast talk

### Fave workout tune?

*This Is What It Feels Like* by Armin van Buuren

### Make-up must-have?

Mac Zoom Fast waterproof mascara

### Three desert-island essentials?

Whisky, water and chocolate

