

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH...

Celebrity personal trainer Matt Hodges

● How did you get into personal training?

I'd always been into sports from an early age.

My dad was a semi-pro rugby player and both parents were always active.

I became a gym bunny and got recognised by a photographer in London.

I was suddenly doing TV and film as extra work.

A small role was landed on *EastEnders* which had me flaunting around Albert Square with no top on, which caught the eye of a few of the actors – the rest is history!

● Who's the most difficult client you've trained and why?

There are just too many to mention, and all with varying degrees of difficulty.

You can have someone who is so injured that any movement becomes an issue, or there are those that are just horrible to you and treat you like a servant.

You have argumentative clients, you have those who pay late (or not at all) and you have others that have such busy schedules it's almost impossible to get them results.

● What's the funniest thing that's happened on the gym floor?

There was the time when a colleague decided to fake having Tourette's just to show us all how to get rid of clients we didn't like.

Very surreal but it worked.

He became the quietest trainer of the month within one hour.

The fact that he sacrificed his own clients just to prove a point has got to get him up there.

Then there was the time that upon arriving at the client's home, their little devil spawn of a child decided to stand on the kitchen counter and urinate in the kitchen sink whilst reciting a verse from *Home Alone*.

● Best achievement?

Writing *Behind Gym Doors* is probably up there.

The pain it took to write it, the laughs I had on the way, the tears that were shed and the fact that I beat my own attention deficit disorder in getting it finished makes it an accomplishment.

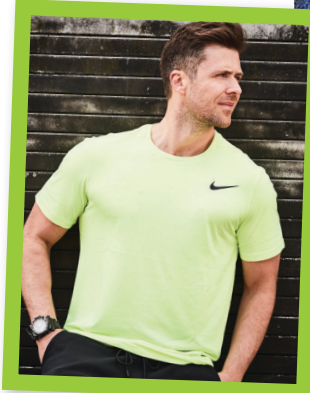
● Favourite thing about your job?

The people, the clients, the results, the freedom, and the experiences.

The privilege of being allowed into the lives of people who put their complete trust in me is a very comforting feeling.

To know I've helped someone lights my fire up.

● *Behind Gym Doors* by Matt Hodges, £12.99, available on Amazon



The day I met my idol - Olly Murs



A selfie with Sheridan Smith



Meeting Les Dennis was surreal!

HEART SKIPS A BEAT

When Emily Severn, 21, from Nottingham, met her idol, she had no idea where it would lead her...

Filing out of the arena, my throat was beginning to feel hoarse. I had just spent two hours screaming my favourite songs alongside thousands of other fans.

But, while the concert had been incredible, the best memory, for me, had come before it even started.

I got to meet my idol and favourite singer – Olly Murs.

Rushing to the stage door at Nottingham Arena with hours to go, I bagged myself a spot at the front of the barrier and waited him to come out.

It was May 2019 and I had dragged my mum, Elizabeth, 57, along with me, but I secretly thought she was just as excited! 'I think he's coming!' I squealed to her.

And, bursting out the door with his usual cheeky grin,

there he was, just metres in front of me.

'Can I get a picture, Olly?' I shouted excitedly. 'I've got something to give you!'

'Of course,' he said, coming over and posing for the camera.

I was part of a community of fans online and had a book of fan messages to give to him.

'Wow – thank you!' he said, glancing over the pages. 'I'll be sure to read that later.'

Beaming, I was over the moon. Despite only getting to exchange a few words, it was more than I could've hoped for.

And, posting our picture on Instagram, I proudly showed off our selfie.

I quickly realised that there was a whole community of people out there who met celebs regularly.

I want to do that too, I

thought to myself.

Meeting Olly for even a few seconds had given me such a buzz that I had definitely caught the bug!

So, moving to Manchester for university in September 2019, I researched events going on near me.

And quickly realised that *The Voice* was hosting blind auditions just 10 minutes away from my halls.

I absolutely loved *The Voice*, as well as singing myself in my spare time.

My dream is to be on the show one day.

But for now, it was enough to meet the judges in a slightly different way!

Making my way up to the red-carpet barriers, I cheered alongside the other fans.

The atmosphere was absolutely amazing.

It needed to be – to keep us going through the hours of waiting in the cold!

Then, two hours after arriving, I caught a glimpse of a red stiletto stepping out of the limo.

It was none other than Meghan Trainor.

WILL.I.AM stepped out after her, and I

managed to have a quick chat and snap another selfie with them both.

After that, I ventured into waiting outside the *Corrie* set.

Bringing my *Corrie*-obsessed mum along with me, we got to meet our favourite actor – Rob Mallard.

We soon became regulars and he'd come over to me and my mum and ask how we were!

'How has your day been?' I'd ask him.

While at first, I could barely utter out the words 'can I have a picture?', my confidence had grown masses.

Meeting the celebrities made

me realise that I didn't have to be the shy girl that everyone knew me as.

I could be someone who was totally different.

I've since gone on to meet the likes of Gareth Southgate, Anton Du Beke, Joanne Froggatt and Craig Revel Horwood!

I've now met over 500 celebs!

My favourite memory is meeting Alexander Lincoln.

It was November 2019 and I went to the *Emmerdale* fan club weekend, where you could meet and chat to the cast.

'How are you?' I asked Alex, excited to talk about something

other than a picture.

We chatted for about 10 minutes and I told him that I was at university and loved singing and song-writing in my spare time.

'You'll have to send over anything you write!' he said.

In October last year I met him again at the British Film Institute Festival in London, and it was an incredible feeling when he recognised me.

'How's uni going?' he asked, like we were old friends.

Another amazing moment was when Olly Murs recognised me, the second time I met him in Manchester in October 2019.

He told me he still had the book I'd given him at home.

My friends online were all so excited.

People around me always make comments that I'm much more out of my shell, and I owe all that to Olly.

If I hadn't have met him for that first time in Nottingham, I never would have caught the celebrity bug.

In the future, my dream is to interview celebs for a living.

I've certainly had a whole lot of practice!

● Follow Emily on Instagram: @itsemilysevern

I've now met over 500 celebs!



I want to meet the whole Strictly cast!



Me and WILL.I.AM