

Press release

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**Peterborough body builder raises over £1k for domestic abuse charity**

Martin Dougherty, of Peterborough, has raised more than £1k for a domestic abuse charity and come second place in the UK Drug Free Bodybuilding Association’s Natural Bodybuilding Worldwide Classic competition in the Grandmaster's category.

Martin 56, has been in training for months, doing cardio and lifting weights at a home-built gym that he created during lockdown. He took part in the competition at the end of May where he performed a routine on stage to over 600 people.

In preparation he worked closely with his coach Adam Northover, alongside the weight training, cardio and strict diet. Martin also had several sessions with a posing coach Emma Hyndman, who helped him to hold special poses to show off his muscles.

Martin was motivated to raise money for Woman’s Trust as he previously volunteered as a Special Constable in Peterborough for seven years. Martin says: “I came across a lot of domestic violence incidents. I attended one where a woman had been locked up by her partner for three days with a serious head injury. We made sure she received help, and the man was sentenced to five years in prison.

“Having stepped away from that I wanted to contribute something, and I thought gaining sponsorship for Woman’s Trust would be a good thing to do.”

Woman’s Trust was set up in 1996 to help survivors of domestic abuse rebuild their mental health through free, specialist counselling. To date they have worked with more than 18,500 women and in the last few years have seen an increase in the number of women coming forward for help.

Specialist counselling helps survivors of domestic abuse recover their mental health. Common impacts from domestic abuse include depression, post-traumatic stress, suicidal thoughts and low self-esteem.

Martin adds “It was my crazy idea to enter a bodybuilding championship for the first time at my age. I’m looking forward to spending a bit less time in the gym and eating more varied food.”

Martin is a Chief Operating Officer at the Wellcome Sanger Institute in Cambridge where he has received a lot of support from his colleagues.

“They have been very encouraging. This journey started with me wanting to improve my fitness and losing some weight. I have achieved that and lost over 30kg. Unexpectedly I found the bodybuilding community to be really supportive and I now have my sights on a gold medal for next year.”

Heidi Riedel, CEO of Woman’s Trust says: “Woman’s Trust is grateful to Martin. This is a huge achievement, and those funds will help more survivors of domestic abuse access much needed specialist counselling and self-development workshops. This is critical for women to manage their trauma and rebuild their lives.”

Ends

Image Caption: Martin Dougherty with his award

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**Notes to Editors**

About Woman’s Trust

Woman’s Trust is a charity set up in 1996 to help women in London affected by domestic abuse overcome the mental and emotional harm through person centred, trauma-informed counselling and therapeutic support services led by an all-female team.