# Sally Gunnell discusses lifestyle changes after friend's sudden death



Sally Gunnell OBE, a celebrated Olympian, has shared significant lifestyle changes she has made following the unexpected death of her friend, a former physiotherapist, who suffered a massive heart attack with no prior warning signs. The shocking incident occurred despite the 61-year-old living an active lifestyle characterised by cycling and regular gym workouts, coupled with moderate alcohol consumption.

In a recent exclusive interview with the Mirror, Gunnell recounted the devastating moment her friend passed away, stating, "He died just instantly, and that was it. There was nothing. No warnings. I think he'd been out on his bike a couple of days before." Reflecting on her friend's long-standing commitment to fitness, Gunnell mentioned, "He was an athlete for many years, had always kept himself fit and healthy, but I guess you just don't know what stress people are under and what else is going on in their life."

This tragic event highlights a pressing global health concern, as heart attacks rank as the leading cause of death for both men and women. According to statistics from the British Heart Foundation, nearly 100,000 hospital visits in the UK each year are due to heart attacks—an alarming rate of one incident every five minutes. The Cleveland Clinic adds that between 20 to 60% of these heart attacks may occur silently, without any pain or prior symptoms.

The impact of her friend's sudden death prompted Gunnell and her husband, John, to undergo comprehensive health assessments with Bluecrest Wellness. This examination, which lasted about 30 to 45 minutes, included blood tests, an ECG, and various other health evaluations. The results indicated that while Sally's iron levels were slightly elevated, her 'metabolic age' was determined to be 42, which is 15 years younger than her actual age of 57. Conversely, John's health outcomes were more concerning, revealing high cholesterol levels and early signs of arterial plaque, a symptom similar to that observed in their deceased friend.

Gunnell observed that her husband was initially in denial about the seriousness of the situation. “I think John was a bit in denial because sport and exercise have always been in our lives, and you know, and we do eat pretty healthy,” she noted. “He was a bit like, 'Oh, I'm not going to do anything that's fine, we'll just carry on,' and of course, I panicked going, 'Well, hang on a minute, I can't just ignore this.’"

In response to their health check results, the couple has taken proactive steps to enhance their well-being. Sally decided to reduce her red meat intake to better manage her iron levels, while John began taking statins to control his low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels. Together, they have modified their exercise routine to a less vigorous 'Zone Two' approach and are planning another health check soon.

Sally articulated the importance of being informed about one’s health, asserting, “It's very easy to bury your head, and sometimes you're like, 'Do I really want to know?' And of course, we do really, because, you know, I've always believed that if we leave it too late, it becomes a bigger issue and I'd rather prevent things. I'd rather make changes within my life before it's too late.” Furthermore, she remarked on the revelations surrounding the health conditions of public figures like Davina McCall and Sir Chris Hoy, stating, “it really brings home the importance of facing up to this stuff, knowing your numbers, and understanding your risks, without being scared.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/health/fitness/eat-athlete-sally-gunnell> - This article provides insights into Sally Gunnell's lifestyle and dietary habits, which are relevant to her overall health and fitness routine. It highlights her emphasis on healthy eating and staying active.
* <https://www.sallygunnell.com/corporate-wellbeing/energise-you> - This webpage discusses Sally Gunnell's involvement in corporate wellbeing programs, focusing on aspects like nutrition and exercise, which align with her proactive approach to health.
* <https://www.yours.co.uk/wellbeing/health/sally-gunnell-menopause/> - This article touches on Sally Gunnell's approach to maintaining health and fitness, particularly as she ages, which is relevant to her reflections on health following her friend's passing.
* <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/heart-matters-magazine/medical/myocardial-infarction/heart-attacks> - This webpage from the British Heart Foundation provides statistics and information about heart attacks, which are mentioned as a leading cause of death and a concern highlighted by Sally Gunnell's friend's sudden death.
* <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/silent-heart-attacks-what-you-need-to-know/> - This article from the Cleveland Clinic explains the concept of silent heart attacks, which can occur without symptoms, a fact mentioned in the context of heart health concerns.
* <https://www.bluecrestwellness.com/health-assessments> - This webpage describes the type of comprehensive health assessments that Sally Gunnell and her husband underwent, which included blood tests and other evaluations to assess their health risks.
* <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/celebs-tv/olympian-sally-gunnell-shares-wake-10020143> - Please view link - unable to able to access data