# Nicky Wager's journey with endometriosis: Finding strength through hiking



Nicky Wager, a 40-year-old woman from Leith, Edinburgh, has shared her challenging journey with endometriosis, a painful condition that affects one in ten women in the UK. Her struggle with debilitating pelvic pain began as a teenager, and despite being diagnosed with polycystic ovaries at 15, it was not until she experienced excruciating pain while decorating a Christmas tree at the age of 27 that she finally received a correct diagnosis. This painful episode ultimately led to a diagnosis of endometriosis, which commenced a deeply challenging chapter in her life that included six surgical procedures.

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the womb begins to grow outside of it, often leading to chronic pain and other complications. According to Nicky, the condition has "ruined my life in so many ways," yet she also noted that it has introduced her to new experiences and friendships. Speaking about her journey, Nicky expressed gratitude for these relationships, stating, “I’m so grateful for that.”

Fortuitously, Nicky had a supportive doctor who did not dismiss her symptoms as mere “women's problems” or “just bad periods.” He promptly referred her for further investigation, culminating in her diagnosis and subsequent surgeries. However, not all her experiences with healthcare professionals were positive. Out of the five consultants who had been involved in her surgeries, she described a profound lack of understanding and compassion from four of them. "I had to constantly repeat myself at every appointment. The consultant who did my fifth and sixth surgeries was entirely different. When he looked me in the eye, I knew that he cared,” she explained.

Nicky’s ordeal came after a miscarriage in 2016, wherein her symptoms intensified. During the COVID-19 pandemic, her situation deteriorated further as all hospital visits were suspended, leaving her in considerable discomfort and forced to manage her condition largely on her own. She stated, “I had pain every single day of varying degrees of severity... sitting down was excruciating.”

Seeking relief, Nicky began walking substantial distances simply to avoid prolonged sitting. It was during a trip to Derwent Edge in the Peak District, amidst stunning scenery, that she discovered the therapeutic benefits of hiking. “I realised that hiking might be something which could change my life. I was hooked, and never looked back,” she recalled. Hiking not only provided physical benefits but also gave her a sense of autonomy and emotional relief, helping to alleviate her constant back pain and improve her mental health.

Embracing her experience, Nicky became an ambassador for the Merrell Hiking Club, which focuses on empowering female hikers. In May 2023, she established Endo-MEET-riosis, a hiking group aimed at bringing together women who are affected by endometriosis. Nicky expressed her initial apprehension about setting up the events, reflecting on whether others would find them helpful or engaging. However, her first outing attracted 12 participants, many of whom have since attended subsequent events.

“One of the things I’ve loved to see is the friendships and support networks that the women have nurtured since coming along. Essentially, I just don’t want anyone to feel alone,” she said. Through her efforts, Nicky hopes to continue promoting the benefits of hiking for both physical and mental well-being. “My condition has led to some very difficult times in my life, and I sometimes wonder whether, if I’d had access to a group of women who really understood what I was going through, that parts of my life could have gone differently,” she added.

With a focus on camaraderie and mutual support, Nicky Wager’s story raises awareness about endometriosis and highlights how shared experiences can lead to healing and empowerment among women facing similar struggles.

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

## References

* <https://www.endometriosis-uk.org/endometriosis-facts-and-figures> - This resource corroborates the prevalence of endometriosis, noting that it affects about 1 in 10 women of reproductive age in the UK. It also highlights the condition's impact on fertility and the time it often takes for a diagnosis.
* <https://www.cprd.com/approved-studies/incidence-and-prevalence-endometriosis-england-between-2010-and-2020> - This study investigates the incidence and prevalence of endometriosis in England, which supports the claim about the condition's prevalence and its effects, such as chronic pain and fertility issues.
* <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2024.12.11.24318835v1> - This preprint provides insights into the characteristics of women diagnosed with endometriosis in England, highlighting sociodemographic differences and access to services, which can explain variations in healthcare experiences.
* <https://www.gofundme.com/validator> - Unfortunately, this is not directly relevant to endometriosis. Instead, you might consider a charity site, such as Endometriosis UK, which provides support and information about the condition.
* <https://www.endometriosis.org/> - This resource offers comprehensive information on endometriosis, including its causes, symptoms, and treatment options, which aligns with the descriptions provided in Nicky Wager's journey.
* <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/endometriosis/> - This NHS webpage explains the symptoms and treatments of endometriosis, supporting Nicky Wager's experiences with chronic pain and the challenges of diagnosis and treatment.