# Tom Daley reveals how a coach's cruel remark triggered his eating disorder battle



Tom Daley has opened up about his battles with body dysmorphia and bulimia, revealing how the pressures of competitive diving significantly affected his mental health. In his documentary, *Tom Daley: 1.6 Seconds*, the 31-year-old former Olympic gold medallist recalls a particularly harsh comment from a diving instructor that set off his struggle with body image. He explained that in late 2011, a performance director at British Diving told him he needed to lose weight, highlighting an overwhelming focus on appearance rather than athletic performance.

Daley's experience reflects a broader issue where athletes, especially male ones, grapple with expectations surrounding body image. He shared, “It was the first time where I felt that I was being looked at and judged not for how I did in the diving pool, but for how I looked.” Such comments fostered a harmful mindset, prompting him to resort to extreme measures regarding his eating habits. He vividly described his mental turmoil, noting, "I had a diary that I would write in, and at the top of it, I’d write the date and my weight." This obsession led to a cycle of binging and guilt, further deepening his struggles.

The stigma surrounding men's mental health and eating disorders played a crucial role in Daley’s feelings of isolation. He stated, “I felt very alone and unable to talk to anyone about my struggles...” Historically, society has perpetuated the notion that “men didn’t have eating disorders,” profoundly affecting his willingness to seek help. This mindset prevented him from openly discussing his feelings, which compounded his sense of shame and isolation.

Daley's revelations highlight the urgent need to address male eating disorders openly. He emphasized the importance of recognition and support for all individuals facing these challenges, irrespective of gender. In past interviews, he noted that the pressures of sport often remain unspoken among male athletes, with many suffering in silence. This prevailing stigma not only affects the well-being of individual athletes but also the culture surrounding mental health in sports.

Despite the challenges of his past, Daley has found healthier outlets. He expressed that he has gradually rebuilt his relationship with food, crediting understanding nutrition and finding support as key factors in his recovery. “I now enjoy food again,” he remarked, noting that previous restrictions on his diet had also stemmed from a misunderstanding of his nutritional needs.

As Daley transitions into life after diving, his priorities have shifted. He shares two children—twins Robert 'Robbie' and Phoenix Rose—with his husband, Lance Black. Becoming a parent has provided him with a new perspective, as he looks forward to sharing his story with his children. He noted, “It made me very emotional, but I’m really excited to be able to show it to my kids in the future: 'This is what I did as an athlete.'”

Moving beyond the confines of competitive sport, Daley has adopted knitting as a therapeutic outlet, asserting that it served as a “healthy distraction” during the lockdowns of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through creative pursuits like his upcoming Channel 4 show, *Game of Wool*, he finds balance and joy, illustrating a significant evolution in both his personal and professional life.

Daley's journey serves not only as a testament to overcoming personal battles but also a call to action for broader discussions around men's mental health and body image in the sporting world. His courage in sharing these experiences may pave the way for a more supportive environment where all athletes feel empowered to address their struggles openly.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14769995/Tom-Daley-reveals-savage-comment-one-diving-instructors-led-battling-body-dysmorphia-bulimia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://people.com/health/tom-daley-says-he-had-mild-form-of-eating-disorder-in-2012/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14769995/Tom-Daley-reveals-savage-comment-one-diving-instructors-led-battling-body-dysmorphia-bulimia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/tom-daley-disordered-eating-body-image-b1933932.html), [[5]](https://www.businessinsider.com/tom-daley-had-eating-disorder-weight-pressure-from-former-coach-2021-10)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/body/actually-learned-enjoy-food-tom-daley-beat-eating-disorder/), [[6]](https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/tom-daley-mental-health-eating-disorder-b2173093.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14769995/Tom-Daley-reveals-savage-comment-one-diving-instructors-led-battling-body-dysmorphia-bulimia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14769995/Tom-Daley-reveals-savage-comment-one-diving-instructors-led-battling-body-dysmorphia-bulimia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/body/actually-learned-enjoy-food-tom-daley-beat-eating-disorder/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-14769995/Tom-Daley-reveals-savage-comment-one-diving-instructors-led-battling-body-dysmorphia-bulimia.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://people.com/health/tom-daley-says-he-had-mild-form-of-eating-disorder-in-2012/> - In a 2021 interview, Olympic diver Tom Daley revealed he struggled with a mild eating disorder in 2012, including self-induced vomiting and daily weigh-ins. He attributed these issues to pressures within his sport, noting that male athletes often find it hard to discuss such problems. Daley emphasised the importance of addressing body image and eating concerns openly, regardless of gender.
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/tom-daley-disordered-eating-body-image-b1933932.html> - Tom Daley discussed his struggles with disordered eating and body image issues in an interview with The Independent. He recounted how pressure from his coach led him to develop a 'strange relationship' with food, including fasting and self-induced vomiting. Daley highlighted the stigma around male eating disorders and the challenges of discussing them openly.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/body/actually-learned-enjoy-food-tom-daley-beat-eating-disorder/> - In an interview with The Telegraph, Tom Daley shared his journey overcoming an eating disorder. He detailed how comments from his coach about his weight led to restrictive eating and self-induced vomiting. Daley now enjoys food again and has a healthier relationship with it, crediting his recovery to understanding nutrition and seeking support.
5. <https://www.businessinsider.com/tom-daley-had-eating-disorder-weight-pressure-from-former-coach-2021-10> - Business Insider reported on Tom Daley's admission of struggling with an eating disorder due to weight pressure from his former coach. Daley recounted fasting, self-induced vomiting, and early morning workouts as part of his disordered eating habits. He now focuses on fueling his training properly and has a healthier relationship with food.
6. <https://www.attitude.co.uk/news/world/theres-more-to-me-than-just-a-body-tom-daley-dives-into-attitudes-body-issue-291497/> - In Attitude magazine's Body Issue, Tom Daley discussed his fitness regime and the complex relationship between gay men and body image. He expressed concern about making others feel body-conscious due to his physique and emphasised that his body is a result of intense training, not genetics alone.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/tom-daley-mental-health-eating-disorder-b2173093.html> - The Independent covered Tom Daley's openness about his mental health and eating disorder. Daley shared that he felt pressure not to talk about his struggles, fearing he would burden others. He now accepts his body and focuses on being happy with it, despite the challenges of adjusting to life post-competition.