

Grassroots Heroes: Every Body Outdoors



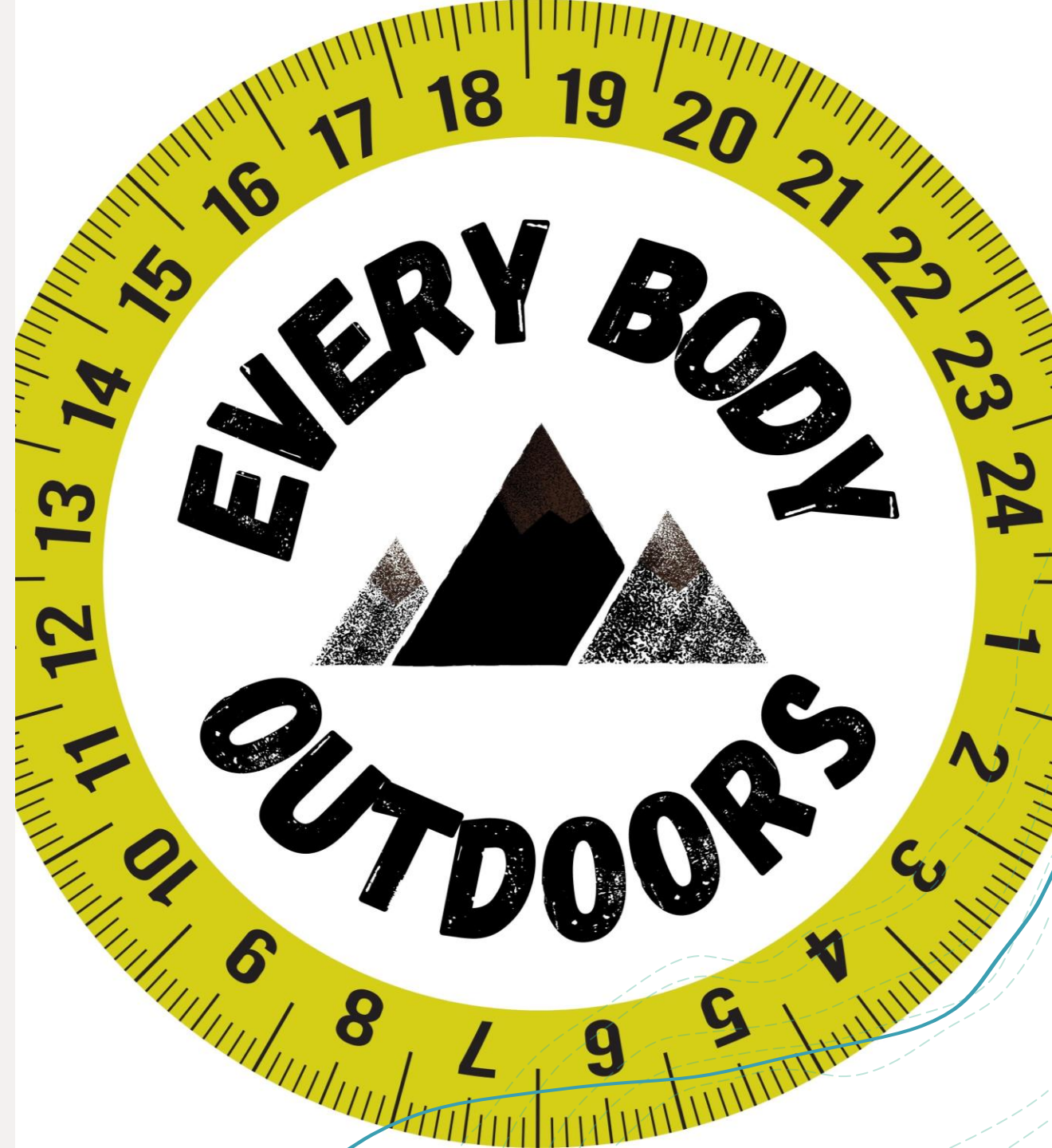
A bit about me

- + Steph (she/her)
- + Hiker with a love for long distance paths
- + Also love cycling and outdoor swimming
- + Work with farmers and as a freelance writer as my other jobs
- + I'm a size 20 (which shapes my outdoors experience)
- + Co-founded Every Body Outdoors in January 2022



Every Body Outdoors

- + Launched at the start of 2022
- + 5 women united over a shared struggle at not being able to access clothing and kit that fitted
- + Focusing on working with brands and shops to improve size inclusivity of clothing
 - + Sizing
 - + Fit
 - + Representation
 - + Stocked in shops



The challenges

- + Little technical clothing above a size 18 (a few in a 20 now)]
- + Clothing graded up from a size 8 and doesn't fit plus size bodies
- + Plus size people often walk in non-technical clothing
- + Challenges with safety equipment (PFDs, climbing harnesses)
- + Zero representation of plus size bodies
- + Focus on fast = good (and therefore slow = bad)



Our work

- + Working with brands and retailers on increasing their sizing
- + Advise on fit of clothing – common issues, size fit testing
- + Have partnerships with Cotswold Outdoor and Osprey for more in-depth work
- + Helping brands with better representation and how to communicate about extended sizing



Women's Clothing (Jan 2022)

20

- Berghaus (fit small)
- North Ridge
- Keela Outdoors

22

- Peter Storm
- Acai Outdoorswear

24

26+

- Regatta (size 26)
- Mountain Warehouse
(size 28-32)

Women's Clothing (Sep 2024)

20

- Mountain Equipment
- Alpkit
- Berghaus (fit small)
- North Ridge
- Patagonia
- Sprayway

22

- Peter Storm
- Acai Outdoorswear
- Keela Outdoors

24

- Craghoppers (fit small)
- North Face
- Rab
- Paramo
- Maier Sports

26+

- Outdoor Research (size 30)
- Regatta (size 26)
- Mountain Warehouse (size 28-32)
- Adidas Terrex (size 28)

Not just clothing

- + Rucksacks
 - + Gregory Packs plus size packs
 - + Osprey extended fit packs
- + Sleeping bags
- + Climbing harnesses
- + Personal Flotation Devices



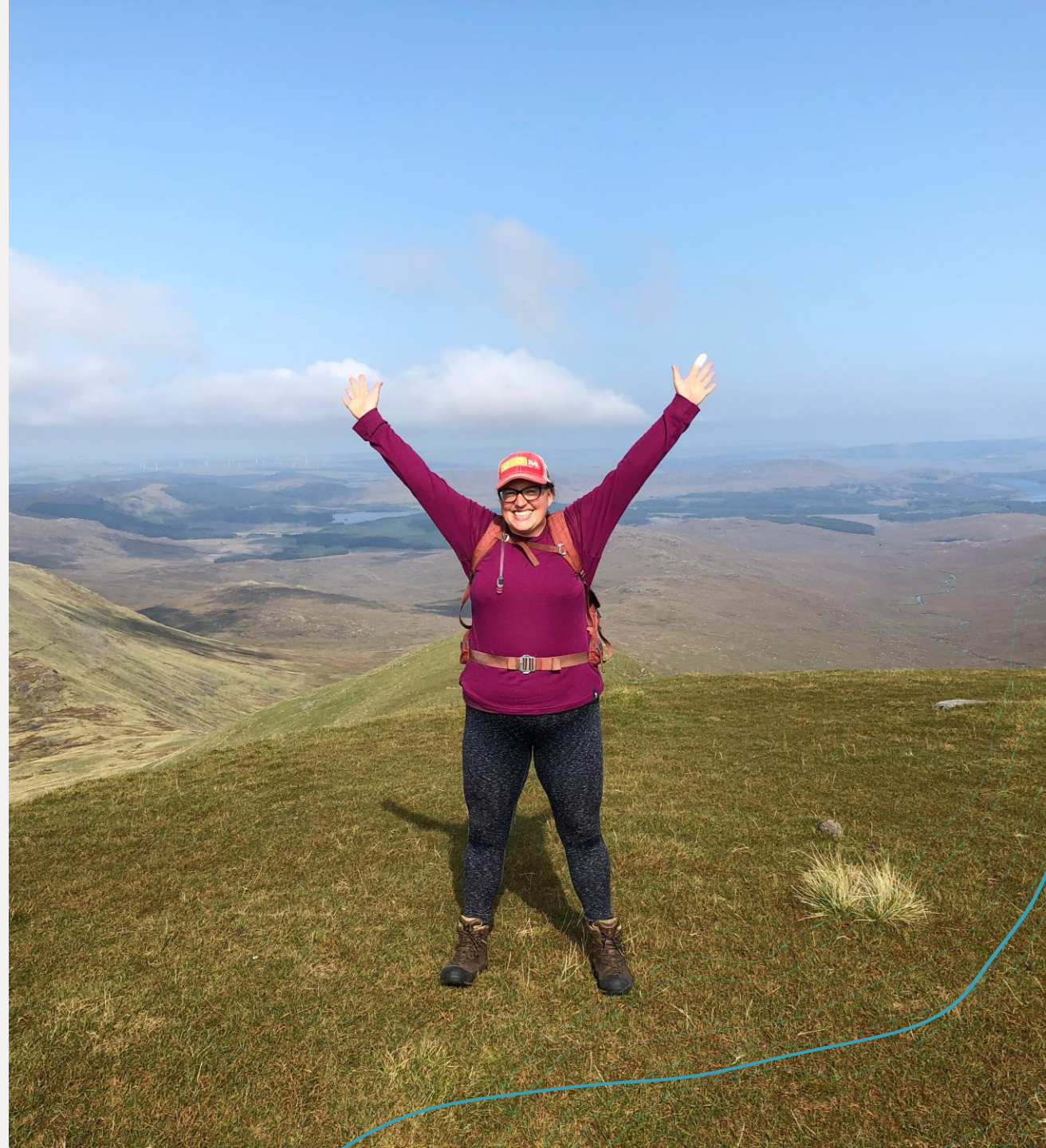
The Community

- + Hit 1000 Instagram followers in 48 hours
- + People started asking for in-person events
- + Started running Intro to Hill Skills courses just for plus size people in April 2022
- + Offer Improvers Navigation courses too
- + Launched regional walking groups run by volunteers in September 2023 and now have 25 groups
- + First climbing and swimming events in summer 2024



Our experiences

- + Preconceptions about what we can do
- + Microaggressions and 'encouraging' comments
- + Not having the right clothing/kit and being judged for it
- + Worrying about being the slowest and / or always being the slowest
- + Being left behind
- + Not feeling welcome in groups
- + Negative experiences in the outdoors



Why plus-size only?

- + People have had really negative experiences - being left behind, judged because of their size, made to feel unwelcome
- + Incredibly high anxiety levels among attendees
- + Space to share experiences honestly
- + Learning free of worry

BUT

- + Important to work to make existing outdoor spaces more inclusive



Our courses

- + Work with a Mountain Leader with experience of working with underrepresented groups
- + Spent time discussing barriers, planning how courses would work
- + Not just about pace and hills!
- + Put a lot of work into information and easing anxieties pre-course
- + Have a kit pool for people to borrow kit
- + Always learning and changing
- + Now run 14 courses over 3 years
- + Higher cost – 2 leaders per group due to additional needs. Received some funding from Mountain Training and other orgs



Training

- + Keen to help support instructors as to how to be more inclusive in their work
- + Wrote article for Professional Mountaineer in Autumn 2023
- + Hoping to turn this into a downloadable resource next year
 - + Sharing experiences of community
 - + Practical ways to make spaces more welcoming and inclusive



Regional walks

- + After courses, lots of people have no-one to walk with
- + Recruited first round of regional volunteers in summer 2023, second round spring 2024.
- + Now have 26 regional walking groups from Cornwall to Inverness
- + Residential weekend training course on route planning, navigation but also soft skills such as group management
- + Many volunteers interested in qualifications



Qualifications

- + A group of volunteers and community members now beginning to work towards qualification
- + A lot of fear around finding a provider who won't judge them instantly on their size
- + Biggest challenge is confidence – people worried about being too slow



What next?

- + Continue to run courses and regional groups
- + Support people into ML/HML/LL qualifications
- + More climbing events! Hopefully run some events teaching climbing instructors on how to include plus size bodies
- + Mountain biking, paddle-boarding and canoeing events



A hiker in a blue jacket and red backpack is seen from behind, walking on a dirt path through a grassy mountain landscape. The hiker is using two trekking poles. The background features rolling hills and a cloudy sky. The website URL 'www.everybodyoutdoors.co.uk' is overlaid in white text across the center of the image. There are also decorative white dashed lines and a solid blue line in the bottom right corner.

www.everybodyoutdoors.co.uk