

## Alumni profiles - Lauren Callwood

BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy, 2005

Senior Women's Health Physiotherapist University College London Hospital

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### What are your career experiences since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

I completed varied Junior and Senior 2 rotations at Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust before specialising at Solihull Hospital in Women's Health. I gained an additional qualification in acupuncture and women's health related courses and have become a committee member of a clinical interest group.

### What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

I would never have imagined working in Women's Health whilst training, but what I am doing now uses skills I have learnt in more typical rotations, whilst enabling me to really make a difference in women's lives, working closely with midwives and consultants. Whether it is antenatal, postnatal or continence care, there is a huge overlap of skills between professions and the opportunity to extend your scope far beyond what I would have originally considered in Physiotherapy.

### What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

I made friends for life! A group of around 10 of us still keep in close contact, and I met my husband on the course! (We are got married in April 2010). I feel the student experience at the University of Birmingham is second to none - you get the excitement and freedom of a vibrant city - including taking full advantage of the student nights, (our favourite being Monday night Risa which perhaps didn't always bode well for Tuesday morning lectures!), whilst still feeling 'at home' and part of a real student community on campus.

### In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

Coming from a fairly small town, I didn't really know what to expect when I arrived and was probably a bit overwhelmed and naive initially! However I found the course and the tutors so supportive and enthusiastic, so that even though as Physiotherapy students we put in a lot more hours than some of the other subjects, it never felt like it. Our intake was also quite small so we all became really great friends and often helped each other out by lending a body part for assessment practice or proof reading essays! By the end of the course we used to have a real joke with all the tutors, and felt like we'd been through a lot together so it was sad to leave. It's testimony to the city of Birmingham that following my degree I stayed there and worked for nearly four more years before moving to London.

### What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

-Work hard and learn your anatomy and physiology! Once you've done the groundwork the rest falls into place as you get more experience. Make sure you put the work in in year two as it's definitely the hardest but it will pay off even if you have a few long placement days and sleepless nights finishing essays! Learn what the tutors want from essays, so use the feedback constructively and ask if you're unsure-there's a certain way to write a good physiotherapy essay and once you know it, your work will be much easier!

-Remember to go out, socialise and really take advantage of being part of a great group of people - you can only do so much with your work so if you're getting 'bogged down' just take a break. An awful lot of development happens once you're in your job so don't worry if you don't know everything - sadly you never will!

- When chatting to people on other courses, no-one seemed to have the same sort of team spirit as the physiotherapy cohort so enjoy being part of it!

### How did you grow as a person by coming to University? Did it change your life in any way?

I learnt how to cook enough to get by and stay reasonably healthy! I learnt a lot of life skills like how to budget and look after myself, which I think you can only get by being thrown in at the deep end! Over the years I learnt how to be efficient with my study and these skills I have taken with me as I've started to develop my career.