

Mark Wright



SO, AT THE TIME OF WRITING, I'M STILL STANDING IN STRICTLY! I'LL BE HONEST, I REALLY DIDN'T THINK I'D LAST THIS LONG. I'VE HAD A REALLY GOOD COUPLE OF WEEKS SINCE BEING IN THE DANCE OFF A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO.

After being in the bottom two I said to myself I wasn't going to be involved in that again, but with each week the competition gets harder and harder and the pressure increases. The missus thinks I have a chance of winning, but I'm not so sure. If and when it comes to an end I'll be proud of making it this far, so we'll see how it goes. To win would be absolutely amazing, especially given how hard I've worked.

I honestly never thought Strictly would be as difficult as it has been. I knew it would be a challenge, but it really has been the toughest thing I've undertaken. I absolutely love it, but it's taking every ounce of physical and mental strength. I'm up against people who dance naturally, where as I'm not really what you'd call a natural! I have to work that bit harder just to learn the moves. Each week I get really anxious that I'm going to forget the steps or routine during the live show. Sometimes my mind just goes blank! Training has been really tough, which probably explains why I got a bit emotional the other week. My mates have caned me for that but when you put so much into something and it comes off, it all just comes out! That feeling of relief when the judge's comments are positive... I can't explain it.

I've been working on a few things to help me relax a little bit. Stuff like deep breathing, for example. I get really nervous ahead of the lives shows and I put a lot of pressure on myself in training, so I need to try and chill out.

Put it this way, the tour next year, and my first dance at my wedding, will be a breeze compared to these live shows! I've been asked whether I'd do a special routine for my first dance and I'd consider it. Not something I would have considered before doing this, but any routine would have to be easier than some of the ones I've had to learn for this!

So, you might have seen some pictures released from my calendar. I'm always usually in peak condition when the shoot for that comes around and this year has been no different, even if it has been a bit harder juggling it around Strictly. I'm pretty fit at the moment but in a different way than usual. Dancing requires a different kind of fitness and I haven't had the usual amount of time to hit the gym. Still, if you can't have fun being pictured in your pants in the sun then when can you?!

I must admit I'm looking forward to having a little break at Christmas, then the Strictly tour in January. I won't be able to 'let myself go' – not that I would, but I'll definitely make sure I get some time off to sort myself out. I've always liked to have a drink and I like to have the odd cheat meal, so I'll have dinner with all the trimmings. There's no point staying in shape if you can't enjoy yourself sometimes. You can't let it rule your life.