



PWCF SPOTLIGHT

CF OR NOT, I'M GOING AFTER WHAT I WANT FROM LIFE

By Emma Fitzsimons, Co Dublin

My name is Emma Fitzsimons, I am 22 years old and I live in Dublin. I've got two brothers, a half-brother and a half-sister. Thankfully I'm the only person in my family who has CF.

I was diagnosed when I was around 5 months old. My mam says that it took three attempts of the sweat test before I was diagnosed – the first two were borderline – I don't quite remember but so they tell me! I was pretty sick as a baby, I spent some months in Temple Street Hospital. My mam says I was pretty much at the worst end of the scale. But now, like I said at the beginning, I've made it to 22 – wohoo!



Emma is pursuing a career in music.

I'm pretty lucky as far as CF goes (but let's just say I've yet to win the Lotto!). My lung function has always been around mid-to-high 90's. I go to the gym 4-5 days a week. I'm sure you've all heard it before but I really can't stress the importance of exercise in CF. I'm not an expert, but I honestly think it's the reason I am so well.

Right now my FEV₁ is a little below my baseline. Even a course of IV's didn't bring it up. I was so disappointed, it was the first time for me that IV's didn't sort me right out.

While I was on IV's I hadn't the energy to do any exercise, as you can probably understand. And if I'm honest with myself, I had been slacking some weeks prior to that, so that didn't do me any favours. Obviously :(

But now that I'm finished them, I'm back to exercising everyday. I am determined to bring my lung function back up. I also walk my dog Alfie, AKA the love of my life, everyday. He is a yellow labrador, he is the funniest thing ever and I guess he helps me stay fit too! And I suppose I am pretty compliant with meds, nebs and physio too, which also makes a huge difference.

Aside from all the boring CF stuff, I am a singer. I'm sure that's contributed towards me staying so well! I have sang since I can remember – it's all I've ever wanted to do. I did the Leaving Cert in 2009 and deferred an offer for college to pursue a career in music. So now all I do is write songs!:) I have recorded some original material, and I'm still trying to figure out a sound for me. I also play



Emma with her dog Alfie.

gigs! I have a wonderful following on YouTube, people are so supportive and kind. I get a lot of encouraging messages from people to never give up and to chase my dreams.

' Pick yourself back up and keep fighting, go after what you want in life, head on!'

I know on my bad days those messages from people really help me to stay strong. So I was inspired to write a song for people like me! You guys who have to fight through life, as tough as it can be, while simultaneously battling CF. I recorded this song for YouTube, it's called 'Follow the Rainbow' and it's uplifting I swear!



In the video I state at the beginning that I wrote the song thinking about the pain of rejection from trying to pursue a music career. I really wrote it to help me through those bad CF days when I'm on IV's and my lung function drops and everything just gets a little bit scary. I didn't want to mention CF in the video as I'm not sure whether people that don't have CF would understand. But if you watch it, you'll know the real reason I wrote it; it can be our little secret!)

I hope it might inspire you to pick yourself back up and keep fighting, go after what you want in life, head on!

So that's where I'm at right now, I'm planning on spending some time in London next year to do some gigs and get my name out – I suppose and to see where the road takes me!

CF or not, I'm going after what I want from life, even if I've to take a suitcase of meds with me! And I hope you guys do the same!

If anyone would like to check out my YouTube page you'll find me at: [youtube.com/emmafitzsimons](https://www.youtube.com/emmafitzsimons)
I have a facebook too! It's [facebook.com/emma-fitzsimons-fan-club](https://www.facebook.com/emma-fitzsimons-fan-club)

And lastly, I have Twitter! If you want to check it out, my address is: twitter.com/emmassongs.