



Frederick Moran and his dog © AE

Frederick Moran (38) was born in Dublin, but now works as a personal trainer and bootcamp instructor in Belgium

“I would happily do my job, if I wasn’t getting paid”

Frederick Moran is an Irish man in Belgium, who used to work for an IT company. But he quit his job to chase his dream to become a personal trainer and bootcamp instructor in Antwerp.

Moran’s apartment is located in the centre of Antwerp next to all the art galleries, coffee bars and bookstores. “I came here for the Millennium celebrations. I had a really good time, so I decided to stay here for one year. But after that year I wanted to stay another year and another year. Fifteen years later I am still here. Before I moved to Belgium, I already spent a few summers in the United States.”

During his first ten years in Belgium, Moran worked for an IT company. “After a few years I thought: this is horrible. I didn’t want to spend the rest of my life doing that job. So I changed to fitness, personal training and after a while I also started working as a bootcamp instructor.”

“Basically, I help people to get fit. The personal training is typically for people who lack the knowledge or motivation to train themselves.”

When people want to get fit, lose weight or become stronger, they generally go to the gym. “Gyms are great. They are fantastic, but only if you use them. And that’s the problem. I think 90 percent of all gym members stop using their membership after the first three weeks. But if you have a personal trainer, you need to continue. If we haven’t trained in a week, I will immediately call to schedule our next session.”

“The actual training sessions depend on the needs and abilities of the client. I have clients who are about thirty years old, but I also have clients who are in their late sixties.”

Torture

“The goal of the bootcamp is the same: help people get fit. But it’s in a group. How can I say this as nicely as I can put it? It’s pretty much torture. You

have to push yourself as hard as you can.” According to Moran there are top athletes who join the bootcamp, but there are absolute beginners as well. And they train side by side. “Both will push themselves as hard as they can. At the end of the session both will be destroyed. Both will be absolutely exhausted. But the results are really good. The reason for that is that high-intensity interval training burns a lot more calories, gets you a lot fitter, improves your stamina a lot more than just steady cardio like jogging.”

“You shouldn’t ever expect to go straight into personal training and make a fortune”

Moran’s sessions are mostly outdoors. His favourite spots are parks and playgrounds. “Playgrounds are brilliant. They are just outdoor gyms. Training outside is much better. There’s a lot more oxygen. A lot of people spend most of their time indoors. They get in their car, spend eight hours in an office and then they spend the last few hours watching TV. So for most people this is their only chance to be outside.”

“The sessions are usually very hard, which means people don’t have time to think about work. All you’re thinking is: oh my God, my legs are sore.”

“It’s a complete break from everything. It’s a moment for yourself, where you decide to take care of your body. And you commit to it. The harder the session is, the better people will feel after it.”

Pink and pretty

Health is very important to Moran. Training is not enough in order to get fit. You need to eat healthy as well. Especially natural products are very important. “Anything that’s been put into a factory that has like 25 things done to it and comes out pink and pretty, is not going to be good. You don’t want to eat that.”

“I have a recipe book with thirty breakfasts, thirty lunches and thirty dinners. They are low carb alternatives to everyday meals. I ask my clients to try at

least one meal every other day. If they like it, then that's great. But if they don't, then they never have to eat it again. I won't ever ask my clients to eat something just because it's healthy. One has to like it as well. That's why most diets don't really work. This is a change of lifestyle. My goal is long-term health and fitness of your body."

"All you're thinking is: oh my God, my legs are sore"

Working as a personal trainer was quite hard for Moran in the beginning. "You shouldn't ever expect to go straight into personal training and make a fortune. In the beginning I was working sixty to seventy hours a week. I was working in the gym as well, but that wasn't necessary anymore. At the moment I'm earning quite well. Because over time you build up your client-base. Now I would happily do my job, if I wasn't getting paid. Which I think is kind of the definition if you really, truly enjoy your job." © AE

Moran's favourites in Antwerp

- **The Irish Times:** "It's perfect to watch rugby. There's a really good atmosphere."
- **Normo:** "It's such a nice place. I don't drink coffee, but I love the smell of it. And their tea selection is great. The fact that it's literally a 30-seconds walk for me, is brilliant."
- **De Muze:** "This jazz cafe is another favourite of mine. Whenever I have guests over I go there."