

Calling all over 35s – there's a whole world of athletics out there for you!

Masters or veterans athletics is for anyone aged 35 or over. We compete in five-year age bands, and it's never too late to start. There are people still running, jumping and throwing into their 90s and 100s.

Some of us did athletics as kids, others have never done it before. Some start when their kids get involved in athletics. Sometimes people start with Parkrun and 10K races, not knowing that track athletics is still an option.

For me, I gave up athletics in my early twenties because of injuries, but started running again to get out of the house when I was working from home. I did a couple of 10K runs and a few Parkruns, then saw a link to the club's website at the end of my Brooks Brighton 10K results email. I saw there was an Adult Beginners and Returners group and started wondering whether I could still do it.

The Friday group was immediately friendly, welcoming and positive. On my first evening, we did a bit of shot put. Throws were never my event, but I was immediately hooked. When I competed last March, it was my first time in 21 years, in my old club vest, which was older than anyone else on the track.

There's a Sussex Masters League, which has three matches a year on weekday evenings in Eastbourne and Lewes, and a range of Masters' championships, indoors and outdoors, from Sussex, through Southern Counties, to British, European and World level and none of them have qualifying standards – you just enter, and become part of a thriving local, national and global community of athletes.

You can also compete in the main leagues like the Southern Athletics League (SAL) where the team always needs more people for scoring events, but you can also take part as a non-scorer in an event you want to try out or improve in.

It's a really supportive atmosphere. It doesn't matter if you don't know what your event is – some people specialise and others have a go at everything. So far I've tried every track event up to 1500m, plus a race walk and a steeplechase (both for points in league matches), long and short hurdles, long jump, high jump, shot put and even (although I swore I never would) the pole vault, plus the pentathlon.

You can take it to whatever level you want – this winter I fulfilled a lifelong dream of competing in a World Championship, when I did the pentathlon at the World Masters Indoors in Poland. There are ranking lists on Power of Ten just as there are for junior and senior athletes, so you can compare your performances with others' if you want to, or just do your own thing.

If you want to give it a try, whatever your level of fitness, the Friday group with Mike Ellis-Martin is a good place to start, with no commitment, no judgement and no pressure to try anything you don't want to. All you need to begin with is a good pair of trainers and some comfortable clothes. It's never too late to start.