It all started on holiday in France when one of my male friends challenged me to a game of Boules! Being a wee bit competitive I accepted the gauntlet, knowing that I was probably going to lose, so my condition on playing was that I got to choose the next challenge!

So three challenges down – boules, table tennis, billiards (we’ll brush over the debate on whether that’s a real sport) - it was time to set the next, and I decided let’s try something new! Bouldering was the chosen activity and we set a date at the Boulder Brighton climbing centre.

I’ve only been climbing a few times in my life, mainly at activity camps when I was younger and perhaps on the odd hen do, so I was excited to give it a go. The fact that you don’t need experience or lots of expensive kit to have a go appealed greatly and it’s the perfect social environment to have a go with friends.

My friend is nearing on 6 foot and a cycling fiend with legs of steel, so at a mere 5ft 1 inch (yes the inch counts!) I thought I’d have no chance to scale the same bouldering "problems" (a route, or sequence of moves) as him, but if anything it was more of a challenge to myself.

However I was quickly pleased to find out that it’s not all about height and strength! Balance, technique, and your brain plays more of a part, and so as we moved from route to route you could see that his confidence of winning this challenge was starting to waver.

The atmosphere at the centre was fantastic and everyone was so friendly and supportive. People would give you hints and tips if they could see you struggling with a specific challenge and without this I’m not sure we would have achieved so much in the 2 hours we were there.
So it came to the final route, we were neck and neck and I was determined to go one better. After 3 attempts each and both struggling at the same hold, we decided that our fingers (and stomachs from all the laughing) had had enough and graciously accepted a draw.

Although I didn’t get a win on the challenge score sheet I felt accomplished. I really recommend giving bouldering a go, no matter what your gender, size, shape or strength. There is a challenge for everyone and it’s a great way to socialise and meet people too. Oh and it’s a pretty cheap activity option if you’re planning an evening of it, as you only have to pay entry if you’re happy to wear your own trainers!

Next challenge: bowling! It is pretty dismal outside at the moment so we will crack out the park sports come summer.