





# DANIELLE AITCHISON

-  Hamilton
-  August 16, 2001
-  Cerebral palsy and deaf
-  Para athletics

## Grassroots:

Hello! My name is Danielle Aitchison.

As a child, my hobbies included riding my bike, making cards, and playing outside with my siblings.

I grew up in Patetonga, on the south western side of the Hauraki Plains where one of my favourite childhood memories is playing on the farm with my siblings. I now call Hamilton home.

## My journey as a Para athlete:

I come from an enthusiastic sporting family that always supported me to do physical activities. I did ballet and played netball and hockey. I also tried athletics, where I sprinted alongside the non disabled kids at the Te Aroha Club (New Zealand). I played hockey for the school team, and I enjoyed it, but I found playing a team sport tough because of my lack of hearing. In 2016, I went to the ACC open day following the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games and in 2017 I took part in badminton, swimming and athletics at the Halberg Junior Disability Games in Auckland, New Zealand. It was here that I was reunited with running again. I was approached by a coach after the Halberg Junior Disability Games who said I had talent and encouraged me to pursue it.



#211

 Watch

[https://youtu.be/SA\\_Dh1Ti-90](https://youtu.be/SA_Dh1Ti-90)

“

The advice that I would give to someone starting out is to ensure that you love the sport and what you do, because you are committing to it every day, so it is really important that you love it and it brings you joy.”

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# DANIELLE AITCHISON

I compete in Para athletics, specifically the 100m and 200m. I also enjoy long jump but it is not an event for my classification.

I represented New Zealand for the first time in 2019 at my first World Para Athletics Championships. This was such an amazing experience. The whole vibe of traveling and training with the athletics team and competing at a world event. This trip, I felt I grew up a lot and was really independent. I absolutely loved representing NZ and racing with the other girls. It was also super special to have my mum travel overseas to be there to watch me get a silver medal and then also have her there to hold me and give me a hug when I was disappointed with the 4th place.

An achievement what I am most proud of is going to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games without my family and competing without them there watching me. I found it really hard as it was not the same, but I had great support from the athletics team, and I was able to achieve a silver and bronze medal which is so amazing. I am really proud of those medals that I achieved and also because the journey to get to the Paralympics has been a wild one especially with the setback due to COVID-19.

To train the best that I can, I ensure that I have an amazing support team that is encouraging and we all work together to achieve great results. I have a great high performance team which includes, nutritionist, psychologist, athlete life, strength and conditioning, physio. then my coach, the athletics team and finally my family. Another thing that I have found that helps me train to be the best that I can be and that is having control over your journey, because you are the one competing at the end of the day so just making sure you did everything you could, so attending all training sessions ready to train, asking questions to further develop your knowledge and just keep pushing yourself to improve.

The Paralympic values were instilled in me from a young age due to my disability. I have always had determination to achieve what I wanted whether that be study or athletics or something else related. Therefore determination helps to achieve my sporting goals by ensuring I do the hard work and push through the hard stuff to help me achieve my goal. Courage and inspiration have also helped achieve my goal because you have to be courageous to do what we do every single day.

## Fun facts:

- My favourite foods are strawberries and chocolate.
- My favourite movie is The Longest Ride – love a good romantic movie!
- I'm a morning person.
- My dream holiday is a snow holiday in Canada or backpacking around Europe.

“

You can only control what you control. You can do anything. Dream for the skies.”

