



“I JUST
Love
 BEING AT HOME
 MORE THAN ANYWHERE”

Holly Willoughby talks to Victoria Young about her new homes range, being outnumbered... and her clandestine relationship

T V presenter Holly, 33, has co-presented *This Morning with Phillip Schofield* since 2009. She lives in London with her husband, producer Dan Baldwin, and their children Harry, five, Belle, four, and seven-month-old Chester.

I didn't exactly have an *Ugly Betty* phase, but as a teenager I had a head brace. I used to walk on my toes – so badly that all the tendons in the back of my legs were really short, so I had both legs in plaster at one point to stretch them out. And I was really accident-prone, as is my daughter now, constantly falling over, so always bruised and battered.

When I was spotted to be a model aged 14, my mum had two rules. The first was I had to go with a reputable agency. The second was if it was going to affect my schooling in any way, then it would have been a complete no-no.

Becoming a model was incredibly exciting – and fun. Back then it wasn't like a fame thing like it is now. I was more excited that I might be on the cover of the magazines my friends read, like *Just Seventeen* or *Mizz*. But I wasn't stupid, I wasn't starry-eyed and I knew it was important to get my education, and I went to college for A levels.

Way before I ever picked up fashion magazines, I was into interiors magazines. Mum always had them around and, as a child, I'd plan my fantasy bedroom and kitchen. Then as I got older and bought my first flat, it became reality.

So my husband really laughed when I was offered my own bed linen range. He said, "You're actually living your dream, aren't you?" And yes, I am! My bed has always been my sanctuary. When we first got together, I had to set Dan

rules about which cushions were and weren't for lying on. He has since taught me is that it's possible for things to look beautiful but also be very practical. So my range is very feminine and elegant – but also really soft and sleepable on, and easy to wash.

I'm totally involved with every part of the process. But I'm not an interior designer so the only way I can design is to base it on my own style. And I'm on Pinterest the whole time pinning boards of home stuff, so when BHS asked me to do a home range as well, I said, "Yes please! I have so many ideas – for chaise longues, and beds and rugs!"

They also asked me to design a range of children's clothes. Mum kept all of my baby and toddler clothes, and that's what inspired me to create a range that

“Mum is my role model, and a far better mother than I could ever dream of being”

would create memories. My children's range is basically full of the clothes that I dress my children in.

I love being at home more than anywhere. You have to drag me out kicking and screaming sometimes! Above all, my house is really homely. I'm not uptight about it, and want people to be able to put their feet up on the sofa. My favourite room is the kitchen, which is a big, open family room. Everything's practical – the kitchen chairs covered in leather so I can wipe them clean – and replaceable, so I don't get stressed out about mess.

But it looks lovely too; all clean, muted colours – Farrow & Ball greys and whites.

The older I get, the more I realise that my childhood was idyllic. My mum and dad just really loved their kids, and they loved being with us. My father was a double glazing company manager and my mother used to be an air hostess, but stopped to stay at home and bring us up. Weekends were about doing things as a family, even if it was just washing the car or scraping wallpaper off the downstairs toilet – because no sooner had Mum finished one room, then she'd be on to the next, and that would be the weekend!

As I got older I'd say, “But I really want to go out!” And Mum would say, "But I just like you being round here." By 17 or 18, I'd just say, "Mum, I'm going to go out now!" And of course by then she had to let us go. But if we could all move into her house and be at home again, she'd want us all back in a shot.

Our relationship now is great. Mum is my role model, and a far better mother than I could ever dream of being. We speak three or four times a day – more to tell her things than ask advice. Sometimes you don't need somebody to have a solution, you just want somebody to listen, and Mum's really good at that. She helps me out a lot with the children, which is great, but we just really like hanging out. And she's expert at making things lovely. We'll go to see her and even if we're just having beans on toast, she'll still set the table really nicely.

I don't remember Mum giving me advice about men. But she was very good at setting me up with good building blocks. So by the time I was 15, with that modelling contract on the table, and going on my first dates, I instinctively knew what was right and what was >>

wrong. She never hammered it home – the main thing that she gave me was inner confidence, which purely came from having a comfortable, happy home life.

My dad is one of those naturally optimistic people. He sees the good in everything, and will always approach everything wholeheartedly and with a smile. His positivity is infectious and one of my favourite things to do is to just watch him watching TV! He laughs out loud and I can remember being tucked up in bed as a child and hearing him roaring with laughter through the floorboards.

He works hard and always has. He built a life for his family that meant a lot of pressure on his shoulders. He built it from scratch with no help from anyone other than the support of my mother. How they did it I'll never know!

I never had a rebellious phase – I wouldn't have dared! I really wish I had, and it's not that we didn't have anything to rebel against – because everybody does. I just wouldn't have wanted to upset my mother!

Growing up, I always idolised Kelly because she's my big sister. She's three-and-a-half years older and we were very different but we always got on. She was super bright and head girl at school. When she went to university, she would let me come stay in her halls of residence – and I had a ball!

She was never jealous when I became a model. She'd have died

if she'd ever had to do anything like that, whereas I was more up for standing up and getting in front of the camera. Kelly went on to work in TV too, as a PA, but she's also a writer and used to write stories and read them to me. We always talked about writing a book together and after she had her daughter, Lola, two years ago, we started writing the first one. We work really well together partly

because our meetings happen when she's at my house and the kids are playing, so it's fun.

My niece Lola is like a sister to my kids, especially my daughter Belle. I always wanted three children and I'm very lucky to have got them. The kids see each other nearly every day and when you see Belle and Lola together, they really look like my sister and I used to, which is lovely.

When Dan and I first met, Kelly and I were living together so he's always known how close we are. It was important to me to get her seal of approval – and my parents'. And, believe me, they'd have let me know instantly, just by the look in their eyes! But you can't not get on with Dan.

We met when we were working on Saturday Showdown. We were really good friends for about six months. There was two other guys who were presenters as well, and we had this bizarre, intense friendship, in each other's pockets constantly. We were filming in Maidstone and staying there two nights a

week. And at first, I didn't fancy Dan at all – I didn't even think about it. I don't think he could have fancied me either because it was such a genuine friendship.

But I remember the exact moment that something suddenly changed. We were in the hotel bar and we "cheers-ed" each other, and I looked at Dan for a little bit too long. And I thought, "Oh my god, I fancy Dan Baldwin! What am I going to do?!" That was a bit of a turning point and we got together quite soon afterwards!

I knew he was "The one" pretty quickly. But we kept it a secret for eight months because I didn't want to give anyone a reason to be annoyed with us or to think, "Oh they're together, what a nightmare." But it was a magic little time.

One child is great, and so was two, but it felt like we were waiting for Chester to come along. He's made everything fit really well. He's lovely – although we struggled a bit in the beginning because he had terrible reflux, which took a while to realise. But once we worked out it was reflux, things got better.

And I am now outnumbered! I feel it too. But we've all just had to adapt. When I had Harry, I literally jumped to his every need. But the older two are already much better at being patient if they have to wait for something because I'm feeding the baby. And what's brilliant is that they adore him; there's not been one moment where they've asked, "When's he going back?"

My only work ambition at the moment is to keep on doing what I'm doing. I set myself a goal two years ago, which was, if I'm going to be taken away from home, it's for things that I really enjoy; stuff that's a hobby so it doesn't feel like work.

As a result, I have quite good at work-life balance. I'm very aware of how lucky I am that I don't work a 9-5. But I have a very good gauge of when things are too much. You can't do it all; something has to give slightly, but the last thing that's going to give is my home life.

This Morning is wonderful because I'm home in time for nursery and school pick-up. I only have to get up at 6.30am

HOLLY'S TOP 5 PICS

1 SILVER NAUTICAL PENDANT LIGHT
Such a statement piece, it can stand alone or as part of a number above your kitchen table.

2 FOUR-POSTER BED
Every girl dreams of sleeping in a bed like this! It works on its own or with soft, floaty drapes.

3 CHAISE LONGUE
I love the elegance of this piece, it's great for a bedroom or even under a window in your living room. It forces you to lie like a Hollywood starlet for a moment's escapism.

4 CRYSTAL CHANDELIER
I love chandeliers, I love the romance of them and the light they create. I've hung one on either side of my bed for extra opulence.

5 GLASS PRESSED JARS
I always have bits and bobs, and potions and lotions lying around. These jars are not only a practical way of keeping your clutter out of sight but also look beautiful on your dressing table or in a bathroom. See Holly's designs at womamandhome.com/holly



“With three children I am now outnumbered – I feel it too!”

HOLLY CLOSE UP

What would you do with a spare day to yourself? Sleep!

What are you best at? Multitasking.

What does love feel like? Safe, warm and yummy.

Other than kids what is your greatest achievement? Definitely my home.

High street or designer? It depends. For shoes, handbag, coat and jeans I'll go designer – the rest is high street.

Spin or yoga? I like doing yoga but being a mum, I'm pretty active, and I don't have much time for working out.

Signature dish? I love cooking things like spaghetti Bolognese and shepherd's pie. But I do a really good roast and my gravy is my signature dish.

What do you order in the pub? Dry white wine, but my favourite drink is a Margarita.

Technology: friend or foe? Friend, although

I've had a bit of a Twitter drought since Chester came along.

Who does the housework? Me! I'm good at maintenance too – handy with a drill.

What keeps you awake at night? My baby!

What do you splurge on? Holidays.

Last time you were really happy? This morning, watching Harry's face at his school assembly when he won an award for maths.

but I still need a cup of really strong tea before I can wake up. I always, always put the kids to bed. Dan does all the mornings, but more often than not back he's back in time for bedtime too.

My relationship with Phillip Schofield is brilliant. We hang out all the time and I love him to bits. I wouldn't say I've got tons of girlfriends, but I've got a very close friend from college called Emma. Then I've got Nicole Appleton. And Fearnie Cotton has just moved back nearer to me. Girls' nights out are rare – it's more lunches, so I can do the school run.

Weekends are family time. On a Saturday or Sunday morning we all get into bed and watch a film and cuddle up together. But I have more of an open-house policy than we had growing up. We have play dates with other kids, which I love.

I can't remember the last time Dan and I had a "going out" date night. It's more just making sure you have time to properly talk. Once the kids are in bed, we pour a glass of wine and we just have a chat. That's all we need at the moment. **w&h**

Holly Willoughby for the Home is available exclusively at selected BHS stores nationwide and at BHS.co.uk

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