

# Meet Penrith's ninja family

How training 'ninja style' took mother and daughter to World Championships

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With 'Australian Ninja Warrior' only rising in popularity over the past five years, it's no surprise that many became fascinated with the pure strength and athleticism of the show's participants. But, there are many more ninjas taking on these obstacles off screen, and some of the world's best are living in Penrith.

Mum Sheri Thomson started training 'ninja style' three years ago, when watching the show brought up an important conversation with her children.

"My kids were watching 'Ninja Warrior', and they said, 'Mum, you should do that!', and I was like, 'Umm, I can't do that, I'm not strong enough to do that', and just kind of laughed it off," she said.

"Then, I was thinking about it, and they're always saying they can't do this, they can't do that, and I'll say, you can if you work at it, so I decided to be a living example and I said, 'I'll do that, if you guys train me.'"

Ms Thomson admitted that starting training was definitely a challenge, with no strength training behind her, and an immense fear of falling. Luckily, she had her daughter Hannah on her side.

"She was more training me at first, because she was the gymnast, so she knew how to

swing on stuff, and she was really strong, she could do heaps of pull-ups," Ms Thomson said.

"Now, we sort of just train together. One of us will think of something that we should try, and then we both compete to do it - that was her idea."

The two not only train at Ninja Parc Western Sydney, but at their Werrington home, where they have a six-metre-long, two lane ninja set up, complete with an incline monkey bar section, cliffhangers, and more to come.

All this training took them to the World Ninja Championships in Las Vegas this year. Ms Thomson admits that a highlight of the trip was seeing Hannah persevere through the difficult course.

"Previously, if she messed up on an obstacle, it would kind of get in her head, and she would mess up every obstacle after that. But, at Worlds, we had a chat about it beforehand, and what to do if you fail something, and how to keep calm and just continue on, and she did really well with that," she said.

Ms Thomson has found that training 'ninja style' has not only been great for her health and fitness, but also for her relationship with Hannah.

"When you're working out out there, playing on obstacles and stuff, it doesn't really feel like you're exercising, but you're getting strong, and your cardio's getting better, especially if you do a long course," she said.



Sheri Thomson training hard.



Hannah Thomson training at home.