

PERSONAL OZ SPORT ACTIVE

AN OARSOME WORKOUT

Rowing is gaining a reputation, particularly among women, as the route to the perfect body

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THERE could hardly have been a better advertisement for the sport of rowing than this year's London Olympics. Dozens of rippling rowers hit Australian television screens in prime time — some even winning gold medals.

Blonde superwoman Kim Crow dominated the Nine Network's Olympic coverage for a week as she powered towards Olympic medals in the single and double sculls.

Rowing Australia's national education and development officer, Ron Batt, could only smile.

"With the Olympics running on TV in the early evening every night, it was a nice timeslot," Batt says. "There's no question it has helped get people interested in the sport."

As a nation, we've long loved rowers and their ability to grab Olympic gold medals. We've been less enamoured with giving the sport a go ourselves.

If your arms hurt, you are doing something wrong

But with all those chiselled physiques — and a plethora of expert claims that it has an unrivalled ability to burn fat — rowing is gaining a reputation, particularly among women, as the route to the perfect body.

Last year there were already 58,411 competitive and social rowers in Australia. A British study revealed that since 2009 the number of British teenagers taking to the sport has risen by a third. It's among women aged 45 and above that the most dramatic swell in participation is occurring: numbers have soared by almost 40 per cent in the past two years.

Almost 11,000 British women are members of rowing clubs, with many more participating in "learn to row" schemes such as Explore Rowing, a program launched in 2010 by British Rowing, the sport's governing body, which has many courses booked out months in advance.

It's no great secret why. Rowing is probably the most effective activity in improving cardiovascular fitness, in toning the legs, upper body and core muscles, and in burning calories.

"It's an all-over body sport; you don't end up having huge biceps or completely distorted legs," Batt says. "For that reason it's particularly appealing to women. At the national titles last year there were more women competitors than men."

With a concerted push from British Rowing, there has also been a change in the perception of dry-land rowing — with the "ergo", or indoor rowing machine, usurping the stationary bike as the cardio gym equipment of choice.

Rowing's ability to sculpt the perfect body means celebrities are taking to it in numbers. Action star Jason Statham is a fan, as is US golden boy Zac Efron. And Pippa Middleton can thank rowing for her famous rear.

A one-hour rowing session can burn 1000 calories, more than a spinning class, because your arms and upper body are used as well. That's more than eight beers.

Most make the mistake of thinking it's all about the arms. In fact, if your arms are hurting you are doing something wrong.

"The legs are the key for the drive part of the stroke, but you have to be strong through the trunk and then you have the connection to the handles with your arms and shoulders," says Batt. "If you don't have that connection all the way through your body the stroke doesn't work."

Gyms are focusing attention on this neglected item of equipment through group rowing classes that are set to take on spinning (stationary bike classes) in terms of popularity. In New York and L.A., indoor rowing classes are this year's fitness craze, with waiting lists for group sessions.

Scott Riddell runs the ERGfit indoor rowing studio in the Melbourne suburb of Ascot Vale. And in the wake of the London Olympics he is busier than ever with clients ranging in age from 12 to 80.

"Every four years we see the same thing," Riddell says. "I think people are really interested in the history of it. People know the Oarsome Foursome, and Kim Crow came out and did really well, and there were a lot who followed her. We get an influx for our indoor program and we can get big numbers queuing up for the outdoor program (with the Essendon Rowing Club) in these Olympic years."

"Because it's low impact it's a really safe way to exercise and it's got great cardio benefits and really good for your strength. Generally speaking rowers are up there with cross-country skiers in terms of all-round fitness."

As well as being particularly good at toning and strengthening the legs, there are other benefits.

Rowing is easier on the knees, hips and ankles than running or military-style circuits. Those who are injured doing other sports often turn to rowing.

The most prominent of those is Crow, who was forced to quit athletics — where she trailed only Jana Pittman as Australia's leading 400m hurdler — because of a foot injury. Now she owns two Olympic medals.



RAY STRANGE

Federal Sports Minister Kate Lundy worked out some time ago never to trade an early morning workout for an extra hour of sleep

GOVERNMENT'S LADY OF THE LAKE

LAUREN WILSON

THE 45-year-old federal Sports Minister often can be spotted just before dawn with her local rowing crew, slicing through the still surface of Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin, even after she has been grilling weary-eyed departmental officials in Senate estimates hearings until almost midnight the evening before.

Starting the day on the lake has been a habit of Kate Lundy's for 20 years, and it's one she energetically maintains despite the dual demands of holding a ministerial portfolio in the Gillard government and looking after her three children.

"Even when it becomes a trade-off — and it's really difficult sometimes because you are usually trading off time with your family — it is worth it because everything else is much more sustainable and you are a happier person when you do it," she says of her exercise regime.

Sport has been a feature of Lundy's life since she took up athletics and netball in primary school. Sitting in her Canberra office

surrounded by signed memorabilia from champion football and cricket sides, she still speaks warmly of the thrill of having the opportunity, as a Year 6 student, to don a blue and yellow tracksuit and represent the ACT's under-12 team in the national netball playoffs in Adelaide.

Before leaving school at 16 to work in the building and construction sector, Lundy played competition netball, as well as basketball and squash.

But as with many girls, her days as a teen sports star stopped when she left school. Instead, as a young mother in her early 20s, she admits, she became something of a gym junkie.

But slogging it out on a circuit didn't satisfy her need for healthy competition.

"I was quite fit, but it was frustrating because it wasn't sport. Then I was down with some girlfriends at the snow for a skiing weekend, and it was blizzarding, so we were all stuck inside."

"It was during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and we were watching the rowing as the Oarsome Foursome won their first gold medal."

After that weekend, Lundy was hooked on rowing.

With the help of her brother (already a talented rower) she and her friends started training, and they competed in their first race three months later.

"It was so exciting and I'm a morning person anyway, it suited me because I had a little baby. I could manage feeds either side of rowing and still work a 10-hour day," she says.

'It wakes me up, it makes me feel great'

KATE LUNDY

"Rowing was the only sport I could have fitted in because even the gym wasn't open early enough for me to train. I started work at 7 and we were out there on the water at 5.15."

Lundy and her crew were soon competing in masters regattas, and on occasion winning gold.

She also secured a bronze in the 1998 Australian Women's Masters rowing with Labor colleagues Penny Wong, Kirsten Livermore,

Catherine King and Michelle O'Byrne.

The only time Lundy let her fitness slip was just before the birth of her third child, nine years ago. It's a mistake she says she won't make again.

"I wasn't particularly fit going into that pregnancy and I found recovery from that birth, and the period post his birth, really difficult because I was so busy, with him and with everybody else," she says. "I guess I learned the hard way the importance of making it a regular part of your life."

If Lundy can't get in the water on a morning she will usually go for a run along one of the tracks around Mount Ainslie in Canberra. She also packs her sneakers if she has to travel for work.

"Whether I run or row in the morning, I always have a better day, it wakes me up, it makes me feel great," she says.

But the Sports Minister hasn't given up learning new tricks.

Along with squeezing in a netball season where possible, she took up hockey and soccer when she turned 40. She concedes her teammates are often forced to be forgiving of her work schedule.

Choose the workout to suit your fitness level  
Perform 4-5 times a week and follow with the strength routine. You will see a stronger, leaner body in six weeks



BEGINNER  
Complete 500m in 2 minutes 30sec on the rowing machine, doing 35 strokes per minute. Repeat, after a break. Twice a week, do four short intervals of 250m-300m, with a 60-second rest between each

500m  
2:30min

INTERMEDIATE  
Complete 1000m in 4 minutes, rowing at 30-35 strokes per minute. Twice a week, do an extra 8-10 short intervals of 250m-500m, with a 30-60 second rest between each

1000m  
4min

ADVANCED  
Complete 1500m in 5:20min-5:40min, at 30 strokes per minute. Twice a week, do an extra 8-12 short intervals of 300m-500m, resting for 60 seconds between each

1500m  
5:20min

The strength routine

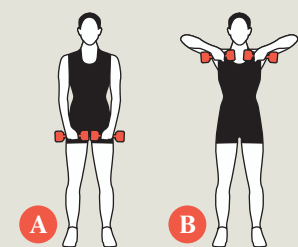
In addition to your rowing workout, add the following exercises, with a one-minute rest between circuits



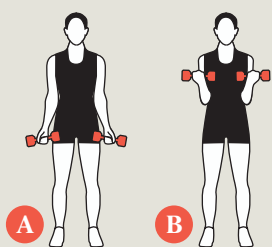
20-30 JUMP SQUATS  
Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Bend both knees, and jump to the left, landing with bent knees. Repeat, to the right



20-30 REVERSE CURLS  
Lying on your back, with your arms by your side, point legs upwards towards the ceiling. Roll your bottom up off the floor, and then return to the floor



20-30 UPRIGHT ROWS  
Stand with your feet hip-width apart, your legs slightly bent, with a weight in each hand. Hold the weights in front of you, with your palms facing to your thighs. Pull the weights up to chest height until your elbows are at shoulder level. Return to the starting position

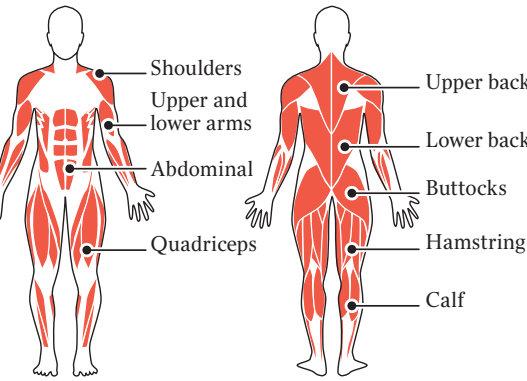


30-50 BICEP CURLS  
Stand with the feet hip-width apart, holding a weight in each hand. With arms by your sides, and palms facing up, bend your arms and lift the weights up towards the shoulders. Slowly lower to the starting position



PETER SMITH

A GOOD ALL BODY WORKOUT



AFP

WEEK'S BEST...

User-pays prayer

FORGET planking, it was "Tebowing" that swept the world last year. But now American football superstar Tim Tebow's signature move — in which he goes down on one knee and holds a clenched fist against his forehead while praying during games — could end up costing you. Yes, the New York Jets back-up quarterback is trademarking the Tebow. America's most famous Christian says his lawyers have filed the trademark not for financial gain, but to make sure it is used in the right way. Makers of cheap mugs and plastic statues beware. It's still probably OK to Tebow for free as long as you aren't drinking or fornicating. Tebow claims he has never done either.

TOP FIVE

Sporting trademarks



TIGER WOODS  
Final-round red shirt

Go back three years and on any given Sunday you would find Tiger at the top of the leaderboard — always wearing red. More likely to have Sundays off these days.



LLEYTON HEWITT  
Vicht Salute

Swede Nicklas Kroon claims to have held the trademark to the vicht ("for sure") salute before Mats Wilander popularised it and Hewitt pinched it.



FLO JO  
The Fingernails

It's common for female athletes to turn their nails into low-rent art but US sprinter Florence Griffith-Joyner started it all. Flo Jo starred in 1988 with times Marion Jones couldn't get near.



TIM CAHILL  
The Corner Flag Fight

Cahill thrilled fans at the 2006 World Cup with his signature post-goal-scoring move. Punching a helpless object has never been so fun since Anthony Mundine was KO'd by Sven Ottke.



USAIN BOLT  
The Archer

One gets the feeling kids will still be doing Bolt's archer pose in 100 years. Only a Jamaican could get away with this cocky piece of showboating which has lit up the past two Olympics.