Getting fit for wedding bells . . . and race circuit

Shelley Jory
British Powerboat Champion
www.shelleyjory.com

SHELLEY Jory is one of the UK's leading powerboat racers and the top female in her sport. Last year she became the face of Honda Powerboat Racing. Each month Shelley gives *All At Sea* readers an insight into her amazing life.

I AM delighted to announce that at last I am marrying my long term race engineer, Trevor Leigh in November.

It is going to be a day to remember. After all, I have been organising other people's wedding dresses for as long as I can remember but first I have some serious racing to do and my fitness has a two-fold meaning not only for the tough race circuit but also so I can look good on that all important day.

In the mornings I am rudely awoken by my alarm clock. It is time to leave the warm comforting embrace of my duvet and go to the gym. Wonderful! You may have guessed I am not a great fan of the gym or indeed early mornings and the two together can sometimes prove too much.

That said I am in no doubt that there are very real benefits to regular exercise, not only for health purposes but in order to function and perform better.

James Seilo of Catalyst Personal Training has been my trainer for the last three years and is the proud recipient of the 'Shelley Jory Face of Doom Endurance' Award.

James, who is based at The Esporta Hampshire Tennis Club, West End, has achieved the impossible and kept me exercising regularly, enabling me to continue competing at the highest level often against some very fit, strong men.

Now for the technical bit – I asked James to explain to me how the pain was benfitting my body.

James says: 'Our sessions are a mixture of cardiovascular and muscular endurance, muscle power and functional core stability.

"The term core stability is banded about a lot in the fitness industry but what does it really mean? If the arms and legs were taken away from the body you would be left with the core.

"Both deep and surface muscles work and fire in a sequenced pattern to enable the body to adapt to its environment and also protect from injury. The joint capsules contain sensors that detect minute changes in position and impact forces which then stimulate a response from the muscles.

"Sometimes, these sensors become less responsive and certain motions may be impaired. The exercises we do permanently restore the correct movement pattern enabling better function.

"In order to train these complex mechanisms, a more unstable body position or surface is sometimes required, to simulate the effects of differing types of random motion. By performing these exercises in a controlled environment, you can prepare the body to better cope with one of the most unstable, changing environments out there – the water!"

James has been out in the boat with me so has a good understanding of how to train specifically to deal with the stresses of power boating.

One particular exercise that springs to mind involves sitting on an inflatable ball, holding a 5kg weight plate straight out in front and rotating it back and forth like a steering wheel.

This trains my upper body to deal with the fatigue of controlling a boat. This has proved incredibly beneficial as I am much less tired at the end of each gruelling race.

If the body is in control the mind is in control. In powerboat racing there is no room for error or misjudgement.

It is true of any sport that the training regime should closely resemble the activity itself. James has prepared my body for the rigours of power boating and helped me maintain a healthy, robust spine which I am going to be truly grateful for in later years when I am an old married lady!

Top tips for getting fit for boating

Be specific. Know your sport and think about ways of training that can simulate your activity.

Set clear goals. Short, mid and long term and, again make them specific and achievable. These will keep you motivated and moving forward.

Variety. Different types of exercise will keep the body guessing and stimulate progression. Combine a weights session with some cardio breaking it up into ten minute segments.

Frequency. Ideally three or four times per week with duration of 40 to 60 minutes. You can also create a cumulative training effect by doing shorter workouts more often i.e. 15 – 20 minute sessions 4 – 6 times per week.

Get out there. Spending time out on the water enjoying your chosen sport will obviously have a training effect itself but try to think of ways that might make it a little more challenging to force you to expend extra energy.

Mobility. Think 3D because we move in three planes of motion. Remember to include movements like lunges to the front, out to the sides and rotate around to keep the spine healthy. The discs in between the vertebrae rely on a pump effect to draw nutrients from the body keeping them nourished.

Stretch. Tight muscles can inhibit movement causing problems like lower back pain and sciatica for example. Practice a regular routine of upper and lower body stretches which can be performed on a daily basis. It is better to stretch later in the day rather than early morning as the spine is a little more inflexible first thing.

Enjoy. Enough said.

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