

June 2018

Blindfolded Rowing

Marks 3 Days a Week Workout

Perceived Exertion to Increase Your VO₂? Sounds Crazy but.....

Music

INDOOR SCULLER Row perfect



Blindfolded Rowing - "Do mine eyes deceive me?"

When I was learning to row we did a lot of eyes-closed rowing. It's invaluable, and I use it a lot when coaching. We should all learn to row as a blind person does - by *feeling* the stresses and balance feedback to our body and by *listening* to the water on the hull as it cuts through that water.

The same applies to rowing machines. I occasionally run into someone who argues they don't believe there is a massive difference between rowing on a fixed ergometer and rowing on the Indoor Sculler. If they'll do it, I have them try rowing with a blindfold - and in every case they're surprised at how different the two feel with the other senses heightened by the removal of visual feedback. Our eyes trick us in so many ways that the other

senses - particularly our proprioception senses - don't. If you've ever seen the movie "**Shallow Hal**" you'll appreciate it's central message: our eyes trick us every day. If you haven't seen it, I'd suggest it's worth the effort - but we've all been sucked in by fancy advertising or packaging for products which don't live up to the hype: how many people check the engineering for the brakes, collision protection and the steering chain before buying their shiny new car? They're the parts that will save our lives, not the red paint!

Some months ago we delivered an Indoor Sculler to my friend and former Mosman Rowing Club and Australian representative rower Henry Macphillamy. Henry, who is visually impaired, already has a law degree and is doing further study while working full time; he has kindly given permission for us to use his feedback:

"Using this thing every day and loving it....keeping me sane while working full time and studying"*

"The perception of being balanced is really helped by the tilt seat. You really know it when you're off, and I'm beginning to pick up on and feel differences in leg strength that I'm then able to correct. My guide dog retired recently, so the rower has been a life saver fitness wise."

*** Indoor Sculler**

Thanks Henry - it's people like you who make the effort to keep this project going worthwhile.

If you have never tried rowing with your eyes closed or blindfolded, or perhaps you tried it some time ago try it but haven't done so for a while, perhaps give it a try - you may be surprised to find your eyes *have* been deceiving you.



My Three Days a Week Workout

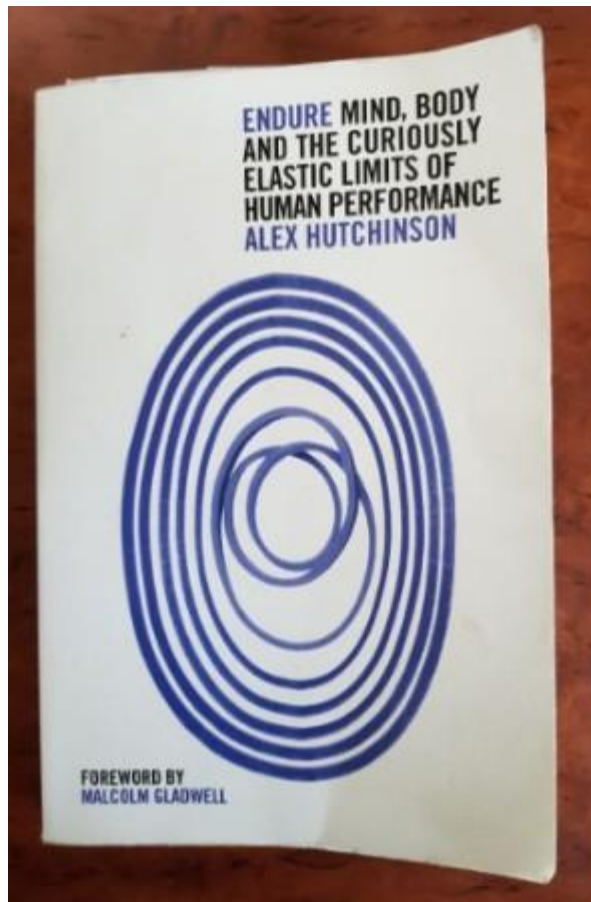
There are many ways to use any exercise machine of course - but after more than forty years rowing, the routine described below and demonstrated in the YouTube video link is my favourite when I only have twenty minutes. We can all find twenty minutes; I love the fact that when time is scarce, I can't use "It'll take too long" as an excuse.

Based on dozens of recent publications, it's fair to say that this workout, or some version of it, is scientifically validated as the best return on investment ("bang for your buck") as well. If you want an exhilarating workout, not to mention maximum production of Growth Hormone or BDNF (growth hormone for the brain - see previous newsletters on our website) then bursts of intense exercise at or around maximum output is the way to go.

- After a stretch, followed by at least 15 soft strokes, I do 200 strokes rating 26-30 per minute with my Perceived Exertion (PE) around 15-16/20, with the option of a sprint at either end (see the section on VO2 Max below). The thing I love about this part of the workout is that it gives me a solid chunk of real rowing rhythm. Sure it would be nice to have enough time to do two or three in a row, or perhaps do a solid 45-60 minutes, but that's not always possible; so for me this is a good compromise. If I'm really pressed for time, the 200 strokes is all I do. It has turned around a few frustrating days for me; I just find a burst of hard rowing clears the mind like nothing else does, and problems disappear or become minor challenges after the magical 200 stroke piece
- Follow with 8-15 sets of 15 strokes maximum pressure, with 10 strokes very light between.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xs0usCSL0ak&t=2s>

As I say in the video, and have said many times before, I don't always do this or any other workout with the monitor turned on. Measurement is GREAT - but constant measurement can be both intimidating, and distracting - as in distracting you from concentrating on good technique, posture, balance and rhythm - see Henry McPhillamy's feedback in the section above.



Perceived Exertion to Increase Your VO₂? Sounds crazy but,....

Thanks Nick Garrett for yet another good tip: "**Endure**" by Alex Hutchinson, Ph.D., elite runner and exercise physiologist is a wonderful read. So many interesting facts and scientific anomalies presented in a very readable book.

One paragraph in Chapter 11 "**Training the Brain**" particularly caught my eye. Hutchinson describes a visit to Samuele Marcora's lab at the University of Kent. One of Marcora's colleagues, Alexis Mauger, had published a study on VO₂ Max, where he demonstrated that runners who completed a Perceived Exertion effort test (i.e. self assessed increasing effort levels rather than prescribed effort levels by measured running speed or power production) **increased** their VO₂ - and more importantly, *the increased VO₂ was retained when they subsequently tested using the conventional stepped test.* I won't go into too much detail, but the steps (which started at say 12/20 then progressed until the final murderous 20/20 exhaustion piece) began with a sprint, lasted two minutes, and the runner gradually reduced the speed of a treadmill at his own discretion throughout

each two minute stage (buy the book for the full detail it's worth the investment).

The results remain contentious, but it certainly seems to be yet another example of how much we still have to learn about the best way to train and test athletes - including ourselves.

Music:

Three songs I've enjoyed many times over the past few months:

- ***Some Nights*** by ***Fun*** from the album of the same name. It lives up to the band's name, with the bonus of great lyrics
- I have to thank my friend Ian McNamara for repeatedly playing these two songs by ***Russell Smith and The Amazing Rhythm Aces*** on his radio show Australia All Over: ***Dancing the Night Away*** and ***Under The Overpass***. A wonderful, thoughtful songwriter, lots of rhythm, perhaps a bit too much of both kinds of music for some tastes (that's Country and Western if you haven't seen *The Blues Brothers*) but I'd argue it's just good music, whether it has a little twang is irrelevant. Worth a listen - personally I love songs which start me thinking and both these songs fit that bill.

All the best, enjoy your rowing!

Mark (Campbell)

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**Regards and all the best from
the Rowperfect "crew"!**

Our mailing address is:

4 Moore Road Freshwater NSW 2096 Australia

admin@rowperfect.com.au

rowperfect.com.au

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