

SAILING FIT

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Focus on the 4.7

Fitness is just as important no matter what age you are or boat you are sailing. With the 4.7 class now on the rise I thought I would focus on some of the basics to get you started. In the beginning it may seem difficult to add more to your daily schedule. By starting small and gradually adding on it won't seem overwhelming and soon exercise will become more of a habit than a chore. The advantage you have is it is easier to establish healthy fitness and nutrition habits when you are younger as opposed to when you are older. Here are some guidelines you can follow to start you on the right track.

SLEEP

Sleep recharges your body. Think of the batteries in your headphones. When they get old they start to play everything really slow and it sounds muffled and distorted. This is what happens to your body when you don't get sleep. Your muscles aren't as strong and fast. You don't think as clear and you may even feel like you are in slow motion. Getting seven or eight hours of sleep at night can help you think quicker and help your body respond faster. This is helpful on the racecourse and in school.

STRETCH

Stretching will help prevent injuries. Your muscles are like rubber bands. If you keep stretching little by little it becomes easier to stretch further. If you just tried to stretch it really fast and really far it will snap. Well, your muscles will do the same thing. With consistent stretching habits, little by little your muscles will be able to stretch further and you will become more flexible.

EXERCISE

Regular exercise doesn't have to mean going to the gym all of the time. Regular exercise includes things like playing hockey or basketball, swimming, biking and going for walks or hikes. This is something that you can do with your friends or alone. Try to incorporate some of these activities into your day a few times a week. Whatever you decide to do, pick something you enjoy and most importantly HAVE FUN!

HYDRATE

Water is one of the best things you can give your body. You need to keep your body hydrated to keep it functioning properly. Remember I said your muscles are like rubber bands? What happens to an old, dried out rubber band when you try to stretch it? It snaps, right? Well, that's the same thing that will happen to your muscles if you let yourself get dehydrated. Try to keep drinking fluids all day long, working towards eight glasses of water a day. A general rule of thumb is, if you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated, so keep a regular flow of liquids going into your body.

EAT SMART

Developing good eating habits are sometimes hard, but very important. You should try to get in five fruits and vegetables a day. These will help make you stronger and think clearer. Make sure you have eaten a healthy meal before you reach for something sweet. A healthy meal is one that includes foods from the major food groups such as fruits, vegetables, protein and whole grains. This doesn't mean that you can't have cookies or Ice Cream, just try to limit the amount that you have.

Most of these guidelines aren't very time consuming. Hopefully you'll be able to incorporate some or all of them into your daily routine. If you already have, congratulations, you are well on your way to improving your sailing ability. Most importantly remember to have fun. You're more likely to stick to it and get better if you are enjoying yourself. As always, if you have any questions or comments feel free to email at meke@sailfit.com or visit www.sailfit.com. I'd love to hear from you!