

Top Tip #9

Thank you to Ed Chaplin, one of the newer recruits to the Littleton solo fleet, for this month's Top Tip.

Sailing Fitness

With winter now fast approaching and if like me you enjoy the windier stuff then a little extra fitness will go a long way to improving your boat speed. With the gusty and sometimes in-out hiking conditions we experience at Littleton; improving fitness levels could help gain you that extra position during a race.

Aerobic fitness is fundamental to your physical performance for all sailing conditions. Without a decent level of fitness your ability to sail or race to your best is limited, especially as wind strengths increase. Improving your fitness level is simple to do and can require little equipment or cost. Running is the cheapest form of exercise and the options are endless for other exercises to consider; swim, row, cross train, cycle, tennis, football etc or any activity that gets your heart rate up and keeps it up at a set intensity.

How long you should exercise for is a hard question as it varies so much per person. The fitter you are the longer your body will allow you to exercise for comfortably. Your aim if you currently do no exercise is to start with 15-20 minute sessions; then slowly build up to at least 60 minutes continuous exercise 3 times a week. Quite simply the more regularly you exercise the easier it will become and the harder you can train.

As solo sailors (or any that need to hike) it is an advantage to be both strong in upper and lower body, as you are constantly sheeting and hiking to work the boat. You can work these areas using specific aerobic exercise or using the following exercises:

Upper Body – press-ups, pull-ups, Bent over rows, Tricep dips, Lateral raises

Lower Body – Body squats, High knees, Squat thrusts, Burpees, Walking lunges

NB: please visit www.skandiateamgbr.com/sport/Pages/fitness4circuits.aspx for detailed explanations of these exercises.

As your fitness improves you will find the demands of sailing less strenuous. Your body will allow you to work the boat harder, hike for longer, work the sheets with more force and quicker and recover from all your actions more quickly. Basically you should be able to sail the boat quicker! What are you waiting for? 10 laps of the dinghy park every Saturday and Sunday morning is a good start??

If you are now eager to exercise but want more detailed info on specific sailing stretching and training routines please visit www.tamug.edu/sail/docs/fitness_exercise.doc see your fitter selves on the water very soon ☺