



Sara Chatwin



Benefits of the bunch!

Whilst personal training is often thought of as the folly of those with a little too much money and time, more and more these days, people are becoming aware of the benefits of training under the guidance of a professional. Taken one step further is the notion that several health professionals can give you the 'edge' that you need to take your own health and sport or training performance to the next level!

For many years in countries abroad, elite and lay athletes have inevitably worked not only with highly skilled trainers and motivators but they have also had input from dieticians, physiotherapists and chiropractors. Whilst detractors of the 'group mentality' approach to sports dwell on details associated with the cost of having so many people on board and the message of indulgence that it may convey to the public, for many athletes and sports people the added attention to detail can enhance performance.

Far be it from any psychologist or sports commentator to preach the benefits of having all in sundry attached to individual and team sports people, at hideously high costs and acting like divas in public situations.

Whilst the holistic 'team approach to health and sports performance' is not for everyone, there are numerous examples of professionals working together to produce great results for the athletes and sports people. Believe it or not the impressive medal tally of Australians at Commonwealth and Olympic games is not due purely to good luck, particularly when faced with the hugely funded and supported efforts of European countries and the United States!

The Australian Institute of Sport and a very sport savvy group of administrators have put together a group of health professionals

available to address most personal and sports related issues that their charges have! These professionals are not there to attain personal attention but rather focus solely on the needs of the athlete. The sports person also has the added security of knowing that there are people available if situations or events arise that call for expert intervention.

In essence, the Australians have learnt that even though sports people can have enormous gifts in their chosen sport; this does not ensure that they conduct themselves confidently and without issue in their lives. We may propel sports people to iconic levels in our national psyche, but at the end of the day, they are humans who suffer the same slings and arrows that we all suffer.....just a little more publically.

As a proponent of a team approach to sports performance, I am also a proponent with an eye to minimalism! On one hand I have seen the enormous benefits that 'Sport Specific Conditioning' and psychological input can have for all kinds of athletes at any level, but I do believe that there have been examples of overkill and too many cooks spoiling the proverbial broth! Yet whilst our athletes remain human (and not robotic) they will need people who are constant, and who can provide them with an holistic approach to sports performance that will give them the opportunity to give of their best physically and psychologically...with some fine sportsmanship thrown in for good measure! ■



Images by Frances Oliver