

Aos 17, o treinador de remo anunciou que um dia de descanso era inútil

When I was 17, my rowing coach announced that taking a day off was unnecessary. That one time of the week that I left school at 4pm and watched *Neighbours* was now gone. I think that's probably why, when I gave up rowing, I stopped doing any exercise at all. I'd had enough. Exercise for me equated to diehard commitment and someone shouting at me all the time. So I did nothing. Which in retrospect was a bad idea, because there were times in my life – getting RSI when I tried to write a book while holding down a full-time job or having a baby and getting swamped by anxiety – when exercise would have helped enormously.

De volta à equipe

It was when I had come out of the baby years, moved to a new area, but worked from home, that I felt the pull to be part of a team again. But I didn't know how or in what sport – there was no way I was going back to rowing.

There are plenty of "back to..." sessions for various sports – hockey, football, lacrosse – but having never played any of these, I was daunted. Then one day a neighbour knocked looking for a sub for her netball league team. I'd been OK at netball at school, so I said I'd do it. It was during that game I realised all the latent competitiveness that had pushed me at school to become a junior world rowing champion, was still very much there. And when I got rid of it, through sport, it took the pressure off other areas of my life.

Amizades na equipe

Friendships on the team differ, we don't know each other's backstories

O valor da competição

This is not the cliché of school sporting types – these adult teams are made up of strong, determined women of varying ages, shapes, sizes and fitness who are there simply to compete in a game they love with people they respect. It's something I thought I would never do again and in the grand scheme of things it's a very small change – less than an hour a week – but it has categorically improved my life, perhaps even built up my inner strength.

O jogo como fuga do stress

On top of that, there was the actual physical release of the exercise, burning through the adrenaline of the shock and dispelling the cortisol from the stress. By the end of the game, I was still gutted, but I had some perspective. I can't say whether I was more resilient than if I hadn't taken up netball. But what I can say is that the game itself, and the act of playing in that team, allowed me to escape the realities of life for enough time that I could calm down and rationalise, so what felt devastating before was less so after. Which I suppose is exactly what emotional resilience means.

37, Messi admitiu depois de

La Albiceleste

A vitória por 2-0 sobre o Canadá nas semifinais que "estas são as últimas batalhas".

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