

health & fitness



What's the score with...canoeing?

We have intrepid Scottish lawyer John MacGregor to thank for bringing recreational canoeing to the Western world. After designing his own canoe called the *Rob Roy* in 1845, MacGregor toured Europe in it and wowed crowds with tales of his adventures. He then helped set up the first canoe club in England in 1866. Even so, we Aussies didn't get the drift until the 1920s and only got serious in 1949, when the Australian Canoe Federation was formed to support our canoeing team at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. It was worth it – we won bronze in the 10,000 metre kayak pairs event. These days, canoeing is pretty popular. In fact, Australian Canoeing's Manager of Canoe Education, Ian Dewey, says about 50,000 to 60,000 Aussies take the plunge every fortnight!

But does this workout do anything?

Sure! Canoeing for pleasure at a light pace for one hour earns you a **POINTS** bonus of 3 – the equivalent of two plain 60g pancakes, so get paddling!

What sore spots can I expect?

None if you do it correctly, sore arms if you don't. To avoid this, power the canoe using your torso instead. Beginners should only canoe for half an hour at a time and those suffering from severe back pain should seek advice from a physiotherapist before taking up the paddle. Ian says recreational canoeing isn't nearly as challenging as the Olympic sport and is "suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels because you can paddle at your own pace".

Where do I sign up?

An hour's trip with basic equipment hire starts at \$15. If you're keen to make a splash, check out the Australian Canoeing website at www.canoe.org.au, or call them on (02) 9552 4500. – **catherine gin**