

Former NFL Player Rows His Way to Good Health

Lowell Caylor Owes His Life to His Rowing Workout

Submitted by Lowell Caylor – Most people have never even heard of an indoor rowing machine let alone used one. I'd like to share with you why I owe my life to one.

I was a defensive back on the 1964 Cleveland Browns World Championship team. While at training camp with the Browns I would see many former players coming back to visit. Most were overweight and out of shape. I made a promise to myself then that I would try not to let that happen to me. After injuries shortened my playing days I exercised on a regular basis to stay in shape.

I got hooked on indoor rowing while living in Denver about 18 years ago. I was working out at a health club lifting weights and using the Stairmasters and treadmills. It was always so very crowded you could never get on the equipment. When you did, there was a 30-minute time limit! I saw two rowing machines sitting idle all the time and wondered how they worked. One day I saw a very fit woman working out hard on one of the machines and I asked her some questions when she finished her workout. I found out she was a rower on the US Olympic outdoor crew and that they used these machines to train indoors during the winter months. I tried it, I liked it and I came to believe in its benefits.

About eight years ago I decided to purchase one for my home.

I have been using an indoor rowing machine, or ergometer, as my primary source of physical fitness exercise for the last 18 years. In May of 2006, I suffered a heart attack that was caused by a 100% blockage of the right coronary artery. My cardiologist felt that because I was in such good physical condition it helped me survive. My heart muscle was so strong that no permanent damage done. When they discovered the total blockage during the heart cath procedure, the doctor said "You are an interesting case study. Most people wouldn't be lying here talking to me with something like this". They did balloon angioplasty to open up the blockage and restore proper blood flow to the heart muscle and then inserted a stent.

After successfully completing the HeartLife rehab program at the Life Center, I am back to doing my regular rowing workouts 4 to 5 days a week in my home!

I must say that I think this piece of equipment is the best there is for overall conditioning. The machine works every major muscle group, plus cardio-vascular, all in one workout. It is also low impact so your knees and ankles don't take the pounding you get from running or jogging. It's truly an exercise for all ages and all fitness levels. I believe in it so much that last year I became a certified indoor rowing instructor so I could share the benefits of rowing with others. I'm convinced that people do not use the machines in clubs because first, they don't know how and secondly, they don't realize the tremendous benefits that they can realize.

Around the country each year there are regional indoor rowing competitions leading up to the World Indoor Rowing Championships held in Boston every February. Last year 1,600 men and women from around the world came to Boston to compete. Several years ago I started to race competitively and have placed second in both the Tennessee Indoor Rowing Championships in Chattanooga and the Atlanta Erg Sprints at Georgia Tech. I have

recently begun working with an online training coach. Coach Marlene Royle was previous a member of some US Olympic outdoor rowing teams and was also a two-time indoor World Champion. My goal for some time has been to qualify to go to the Worlds in Boston someday and hopefully this can be the year.

I love working out on this machine and I know that it saved my life. I spotted a T-shirt for sale at one of the competitions that said 'Row Fast and Die Last – The Race Plan'. I bought the shirt because even though it was aimed at a race strategy, I believe the motto can be applied to my life as well. Today I weigh 221 pounds, which is only 3 pounds heavier than I weighed in training camp in 1964. So far, my plan seems to be working.



Caylor still hits the rowing machine 4 to 5 times a week, and is within three pounds of what he weighed during training camp before his '64 season with the Browns.