

HEALTH



How I Find Balance

Eric Johnstone, 38, director of financial reporting and analysis, People Corp., and competitive rower, Winnipeg

ROWING HAS BEEN REALLY GOOD FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH — it gets me away from always being focused on work. When you're frustrated and feeling the pressure of work life, for example, you can physically express some energy and put things into context. People think about rowing in an elite context, because it's Canada's most decorated summer Olympic sport, but it's actually pretty accessible. [In the past] I wasn't athletic, and I have mobility issues with my ankle, so to finally find a physical outlet that spoke to me was really important.

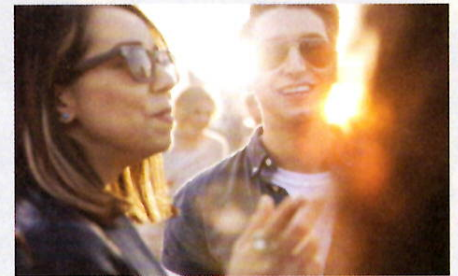
I'm part of an organized program, with a coach who's guiding us, and I do a lot of single work as well as work in crew boats. I like the mix. Rowing does a lot to encourage teamwork and being part of a community, but there are definitely times when it's great to be on your own, to just put your head down and do your own thing. On a nice, calm day, when you're not pushing too hard, it's very peaceful. On those days when you are pushing hard because you're doing race pieces [a type of practice] it's intense but you're with your crewmates, so there's a team thing going on that draws you in.

There's a bit of irony in the title "How I Find Balance." Racing shells, or boats, are long and light — my single is about 28 feet long and weighs about 14 kilograms. When rowing these narrow, lightweight boats on the water, balance is a huge issue. I'm a reasonably big guy (six feet one inch tall), so I have power; the trick is trying to find balance. — *As told to Wendy Haaf*



Talk it out

WE KNOW TALKING to someone helps when we're stressed, but now there are numbers to prove it. In a poll of more than 3,000 US adults that was conducted for the American Psychological Association, those who said they had someone they could ask for emotional support, such as a friend or family member, reported lower stress levels than those without support. Forty-three percent of respondents with no emotional support reported that their overall stress increased over the past year, compared with 26% of those with support. It seems we all really do need somebody to lean on. — *Yvette Trancoso*



Tough apps to follow

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HELP to exercise more, there's an app for that — in fact, there are many. But if you think one is just as good as another, think again.

In a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, researchers examined the top 100 physical activity apps to see how many used 93 "behaviour change techniques" (BCTs), methods that have proven effective in altering an individual's habits. They found only 39 BCTs in all of the apps, with an average of 6.6 in each app. Investigators noted that most apps feature BCTs that are moderately effective in changing behaviour, such as using social media for feedback and motivation, rather than those that are more effective, such as active self-monitoring. — *YT*