

Following the Paleo Diet with Rowing Sensation Ursula Grobler

Nikki Young Interviews [Ursula Grobler](#)



In 2003, Ursula Grobler recreated her life in Seattle. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Information Design in her native South Africa, and upon graduation moved to the U.S. as an au pair. Having taken a learn-to row class at Greenlake, Seattle, she added to her growing list of challenges a newly learned sport: rowing.

In the short span of four years, she progressed from being a novice rower with an unimpressive erg score to winning the Head of the Charles from a 19th seed in the open women's single. Not to mention a silver medal in the lightweight double at the Banyoles World Cup, an impressive 20 seconds win at the Royal Canadian Henley in the Champ single, and a gold medal at the US Nationals in 2008. Her last accomplishment was to break the World Record for the fastest lightweight woman on the Concept 2 Ergometer.

When and how did you first find out and start following the paleo diet?

I consulted with a fantastic nutritionist and fellow athlete called Nell Stephenson. I came to her because my rowing requires weight restriction and I needed to shed the kilos without losing the power to perform. She is the most dedicated follower and believer of the Paleo I know today. With her guidance I slowly started taking off the shades that marketing had me wear telling me what was healthy to eat.

What would your perfect paleo day be?

Starting off with my breakfast shake of flaxseed, berries, almond butter and protein powder, followed by a variety of leafy salads, with salmon, and fruits, especially banana's after a hard training session. Dinner would be a lean cut of steak, like fillet mignon, and steamed veggies, like kale, broccoli, zucchini, carrots. Dessert would be an apple and almond butter or another nut, carob variety spread made by the Living Tree Community. A coconut yogurt mixed with a tsp of home-made nutella (hazelnuts ground up with carob chips and a little coconut oil) is also a good treat.

Being an elite level athlete in rowing, did you notice any immediate performance improvements when adopting the paleo lifestyle?

Yes, the first thing was my recovery. I came to training the next day feeling energised. I could perform well with less sleep and I was more focused, ready to absorb the technical aspects taught. I felt more stable and a sense of better wellbeing in general.

Would you be able to give some insight into what most rowers and athletes you train with eat to keep their athletic performance high, and what they believe/have been told to consume and agree to be healthy?

Loads of pasta and oatmeal for carb replenishment is what I see my fellow rowers eat. I see lots of breads and bagels as well to get their energy and replenish their glycogen loads.

Do you find it difficult to eat paleo when you are at training camps?

It took a little confidence to ask the kitchen staff to change things up for me when it was a set menu. I had to learn to ask for it, and not be shy to just accept a plate of noodles. Other

facilities have buffet style dining halls. Then it's easy to pick and chose the paleo items out of the grains and dairy items.

Supplementation is usually one area of nutrition where people who follow a paleo diet tend to have some leniency, has your supplementation as an athlete changed or been reconsidered since adopting a paleo diet lifestyle?

No my supplementation came along with the Paleo. I use Hammer Nutrition for my sports supplements because I was looking for a soy and corn free product. And upon research, Hammer offered me the most clean sports product.



You recently broke the World Record for Lightweight Women at the annual Northwest Indoor rowing competition in Seattle, what did your training and diet look like leading up to this event?

My diet stayed mainly the same. Lots of fruits and veggies. I was a little more conscious of my nuts and changed my lean protein source to mainly fish. I did this to be lean out for my competition in order to make the weight limit.

Dr. Loren Cordain in his book the Paleo Diet for Athletes recommends the consumption of sweet potato (yams) as an alternative for high GI foods, as they contain nutritional value while also holding the high glycemic index benefit often needed for athletes, is this a food source you often consume now following the paleo diet for this reason, and what other higher GI carbs do you integrate into your diet to assist in rising blood sugar levels when needed?

Yes I love my yams and sweet potatoes, and use those for those high volume training days. So much more flavour than potatoes anyway! I'll eat them at dinner. Or as an after training food, I will mash some sweet potatoes with a little protein powder. Alternative foods that I consume that are higher on the GI side are banana's, mangoes or pineapple.

What's your favorite paleo recipe?

I guess the thing I like most about Paleo is the process of not using processed foods. Meaning I can start with a recipe, but I always start changing and mixing it. And I enjoy taking regular recipes and changing them to be Paleo with appropriate substitutions. So I can't say there is one recipe I prefer, because all my cookings and bakings have become a process that I'm so involved in and its ever changing.

I think this is part of the magic of Paleo because like our bushmen ancestors who were very much involved in all the steps before simply consuming, I feel more connected to my ingredients when making food this way.

You are currently training really hard to qualify for the 2012 Olympic Games, I wish you all the best!

It was so great to download the Paleo Cookbooks and receive instant access to great ideas. The books are easy to read, easy to follow and so simple. Yet really tasty and fun to prepare.

I like the presentation and enjoy creating little masterpieces from the Paleo Cookbooks. I have also enjoyed learning about the great substations for old favorites, like using green peppers as a 'bread' holder substitute, or still being able to bake focaccia, using alternative flours. I just enjoy 'paging' through the recipes planning out great meals to share with my friends and family.

~ Ursula Grobler

USA Rower and Indoor World Record holder for lightweight women
2000m

<http://www.ursulagrobler.com>



The Paleo Cookbooks provide you with a range of dishes for every occasion - from light no-fuss meals through to dinner parties, family celebrations and summer salads.

Using foods provided by Mother Nature that provide the framework and principles for healthy living, these exciting and flavorsome recipes using foods which are basic to our biology and our digestive system will help you experience wonderful results in your health and help to achieve positive results such as:

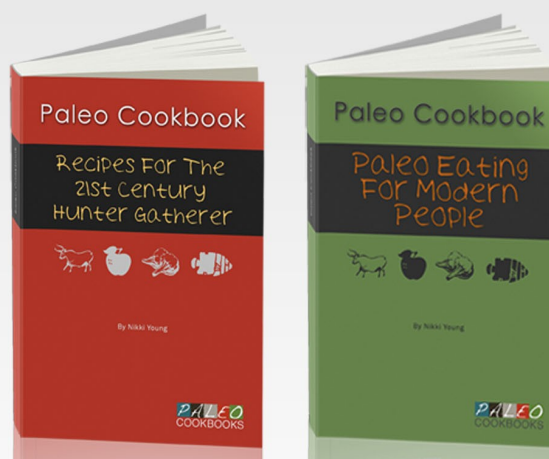
Increased Energy - Increased Sex Drive - Clearer, Smoother Skin - Weight Loss Results - Better Performance and Recovery from Exercise - Stronger Immune System

These paleo recipes are easy to follow and use wonderfully fresh ingredients, with the emphasis on flavor and visual appeal. The Paleo Cookbook provides a wealth of ideas and recipes for a collection of mouth watering meals.

Simple and Easy to Create Recipes with clear step by step instructions you will be able to produce paleo friendly meals that get rave reviews from friends and family every- time!

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