

FIND perfect



Penelope often made a 'rock on' hand signal to motivate her legs

SPORTS ARE just sports, right? And everyone can do yoga, or lift weights, can't they? Well, the answer is yes and no. Of course, we're all capable of moving our bodies in those ways, but we're all individuals, and as with most other preferences in our lives, we all have different likes and dislikes when it comes to fitness.

"We all like a bit of variety, but we do have a tendency to be particularly compatible with certain sports because of our basic psychological make-up," says performance coach Andrew Sparks of Sparks Elite (sparkselite.com).

And as one of the great challenges health-conscious women face is finding and sticking with a fitness activity, it pays to figure out which workout style is right for you. Ever seen an impatient adrenaline junkie trying to bend through an hour of vinyasa flow? It's not a pretty sight.

If you can find an activity that matches your personal style, you're far more likely to persist and reap the spoils. Jeffrey Bond (bondconsulting.com.au), former head of sport psychology at the Australian Institute of Sport in the ACT, agrees, saying: "If you think about your broad personality type – extraversion or introversion – and additional personality traits, you'll find that there are clear linkages to the type of activity that you'll find easier to stick with over time."

So, are you a Zen bender or do you prefer the power pump? To help you find where your perfect workout resides, we've put together some questions to reveal the exercise type likely to give your sweat some serious sticking power. When you're done, tally them up and see the box opposite.

1) You spot the ubiquitous workplace crisis: the colour printer that has stopped functioning... again! Do you:

- A** Stroll to the tea room, seeing an opportunity to take a short break
- B** Start rallying colleagues and passers-by hoping you can swap technical notes on how to fix the tetchy machine
- C** Have a crack at fixing it yourself. You have tight deadlines and need that machine working, pronto
- D** Hop online and start hunting for third-party troubleshooting advice

2) Life has been crazy lately (and doesn't seem likely to improve) and you need a change of scenery. Where do you go?

- A** A secluded mountain retreat promising plenty of fresh air and long walks
- B** A tropical island resort. Nonstop beach volleyball, parasailing and party games will be good for the senses
- C** A road trip with your BFF, somewhere random. The journey is the destination ...
- D** A luxury package with your favourite gal pals packed with options for tasty eats, drinks and groovy nightlife

3) Your plane home is awaiting take-off when the pilot announces delays due to heavy fog. Do you:

- A** Close your eyes and visualise the fog lifting, and smooth flying ahead
- B** Crack a joke. If you aren't going anywhere in a hurry, you may as well have a laugh ..
- C** Shake your head and curse to yourself, then plug in your headphones and pull out your latest read
- D** Tell the woman sitting next to you about your friend's dad's bit part in the film *Flying High*; a great ice-breaker

WORDS CAROLINE JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY SNAPPER MEDIA

YOUR workout!

Sick of yoga? Don't like running? Can't get into netball? You may be doing the wrong exercise for your personality. Take our quiz and discover the right one for you

4) You agree to make a speech at a friend's wedding. How do you prepare?

- A You scout websites for suitable verses to express your feelings. You don't want to be weighed down with too much thinking
- B You won't be preparing anything, preferring to speak unscripted so you can feed off your audience
- C Research the couple's complete life history before writing a charming rhyming couplet in their honour
- D Circulate a group email to the bride-to-be's buddies asking for anecdotes, then craft a speech with still photographs and musical backing

5) Which of these statements best describes the human body?

- A Capable of almost anything it puts its mind to
- B A powerful machine that demands complete respect
- C A biological marvel that's still keeping plenty of secrets
- D An exquisite blank canvas begging for decoration

6) Your boss is a fitness freak and wants to enter a corporate team in an upcoming charity triathlon. Do you:

- A Volunteer as support crew; taking on such a gruelling event is not your cup of green tea
- B Conduct a straw poll of your workmates. If they show interest, it could be a lot of sweaty fun
- C Nod in support, then email your boss to bag your spot on the team
- D Cringe; that much running, swimming and cycling sounds torturous. You decide to make a donation instead

Your exercise personality:

MOSTLY 'A' LAID-BACK BENDER

Lowdown: Let the enduro nuts have their ultra marathons, and the teams their trophies. It just means you'll have more space in the yoga room for your full spinal extension work and head stands. Any exercise that allows you to stretch and strengthen your entire body, while consciously focusing on inner health, will hold long-lasting appeal, Sparks says.

Try: Yoga, Pilates, tai chi, any group gym class focused on balance and weights, or low-weight/high-reps personal training.

Good for: Laid-back, non-competitive, patient, quiet and centred women.

Perks: Provides greater balance and core strength, flexibility and concentration, deepens and controls breathing, helps correct posture, reduces anxiety and muscle tension, and aids body toning.

MOSTLY 'B' TEAM PLAYER

Lowdown: An ambitious people person, team sports are your ideal fitness friends. Born leaders get to captain on-field troupes, while those of us happy to follow can achieve super-rewarding workouts fuelled by our teams' encouragement (and our steely competitive streaks!).

Try: Hockey, basketball, soccer, cricket, netball, tennis, water polo, roller derby, badminton, touch football... all great fits for an all-for-one, one-for-all personality.

Good for: Outgoing, attention-seeking, risk-taking women who are easily bored and usually have a quite good peripheral awareness to aid scanning playing fields for scoring opportunities.

Perks: Burns fat, boosts cardiovascular fitness, increases muscle strength, and improves reflexes and mental agility.

MOSTLY 'C' GO-IT-ALONER

Lowdown: A determined, task-oriented gal, you love a challenge. Not keen to sweat with others, you prefer to get lost with yourself when exercising and use your strong will to set goals, which help you clock up those crazy kms! "Go-it-aloners are kind of control freaks. They usually think the best way to get desired outcomes is to just do it themselves," says Sparks.

Try: Distance running, rowing, cycling, trail running, open water swimming, mountain biking and triathlons.

Good for: Highly disciplined, goal-focused, control-loving perfectionists who are introverted, analytical, impatient, motivated, strategic and persistent.

Perks: Improves cardio fitness, expands lung capacity, reduces stress levels and results in good overall muscle toning.

MOSTLY 'D' PERFECTIONIST

Lowdown: Your stickler tendencies make you compatible with repetitive and precise training. You love mastering complex dance routines or martial art combinations. Your sociable personality suits activities involving human contact, performance and competitions, or exhibitions of your sporty talents.

Try: Ballet, jazz, tap, belly dancing, circus trapeze, high-energy aerobic classes, martial art forms and gymnastics.

Good for: Analytical, extroverted perfectionists who are highly disciplined, motivated by goal achievement, interested in form, beauty and grace, and big fans of working out to loud music!

Perks: Boosts agility, flexibility, balance, co-ordination and stamina, strengthens muscles and improves circulation. 