From Scalpel to Sled



DR KEVIN KOO OON THIEN, Director of The Bone & Joint Centre, shares how he is training for the Hyrox Singapore team relay – and keeping joint preservation firmly in mind!

In my day job as an orthopaedic surgeon, I mend bones and repair torn ligaments. But this month, I'm trading my scrubs for running shoes at the Singapore EXPO for Hyrox Singapore.

Hyrox is the ultimate hybrid fitness race: eight rounds of a 1km run punctuated by eight gruelling functional fitness stations. From a doctor's perspective, it's a masterclass in biomechanical stress. From an athlete's perspective, it's a thrilling challenge.

Fortunately, I'm not entering the pain cave alone. I have assembled a dream team of medical and athletic experts: a chief physiotherapist, a sports performance director, and a sports trainer who is a seven-time Hyrox podium finisher.

Dividing a team relay means playing strictly to our biomechanical strengths. While our podium-finishing trainer leads the charge on the sled, my specific clinical mandate is to conquer the SkiErg and RowErg cardio engines.

As a team, we have broken down the entire grid into four blocks to ensure performance meets joint preservation. Here's how they look:

#1 The Cardio Engines

The 1,000m SkiErg (station 1) and 1,000m RowErg (station 5) offer a brief respite from running impact, but poor form invites acute injuries. On the SkiErg, the clinical fix is to avoid a pure arm pull; throw your body weight down into a quarter-squat to engage the core. On the rower, our sports trainer emphasises a strict "legs-body-arms" sequence. Never round your lower back at the catch, which places extreme shear force on the lumbar discs.

#2 The Power & Plyo Blocks

Next come the structural tests. The 50m Sled Push (station 2) and 50m Sled Pull (station 3) demand a neutral spine. Fatigue causes the spine to flex under heavy load, a direct path to disc herniation. Drive low through the glutes. For the punishing 80m Burpee Broad Jumps (station 4), our chief physiotherapist and performance director advise landing with a flat foot and soft, slightly bent knees to absorb the landing shock.

#3 The Attrition Finish

The final stretch tests deep fatigue. The 200m Farmer's Carry (station 6) requires keeping shoulders packed back and down to protect the rotator cuff. For the agonising 100m Sandbag Lunges (station 7), maintain a vertical shin angle. Finally, on the 100 Wall Balls (station 8), keep your chest upright during the squat so the weight doesn't pull your upper spine out of alignment.

#4 The Strategic Glue

Connecting it all are the 1km runs, which our team treats as active recovery. We maintain a high, short-stepping cadence to lower the ground reaction force travelling up tired knees and shins.

Hyrox is a beautiful expression of endurance. This month, our team will chase a personal best, but our medical brains will be focused on precision, form and joint respect. See you on the grid!

About the doctor



Dr Kevin Koo is a fellowship-trained Senior Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon with more than 20 years of experience. He is a strong advocate of longevity medicine and performance health, with a special interest in minimally invasive surgery, foot and ankle surgery, joint replacements and sports surgery.

Together with Chief Physiotherapist Alice Sng, Sports Performance Director Alfred Sim and Sports Trainer Angie Ng, Dr Kevin also runs a multi-disciplinary sports rehabilitation and performance clinic at AEVI Sports and Physio in Royal Square with on-site imaging services.

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