

Winter Wonders

Pass The Squash, Then The Rowing Challenge

(NAPSA)—The turkey. The stuffing. Mashed potatoes. Bread. Dessert. And don't forget the gravy. Mmmmm...gravy.

The average person gains five to seven pounds during the holiday season. That's because, after a long, hard year, Americans love to feast and fete with friends and family—while diets and fitness regimens fall by the wayside.

But rather than resort to seldom-kept New Year's resolutions to lose weight and get back in shape, one group of folks has found a better solution. Owners and users of the Concept2 Indoor Rower are taking preventative measures against the holiday food and beverage barrage. And the company that revolutionized indoor rowing is doing everything it can to support them.

That's where the Concept2 Holiday Challenge comes in. From Thanksgiving Day to Christmas Eve, participants get on an indoor rower and row either 100,000 or 200,000 meters. That may sound like a lot, but when you break it down it's not so daunting; 100,000 meters works out to about 3,000 meters per day, which takes a beginner about 25 to 30 minutes. At that rate, you'll burn an extra 300 to 600 calories per day.

"The Holiday Challenge is very popular," said Judy Geer, one of the four owners of Concept2 and a former Olympic rower. "Not only do you burn off excess calories, it's also a great stress-buster and an escape from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season."

The numbers speak to the popularity of the Holiday Challenge: roughly 4,000 rowing enthusiasts



An annual rowing challenge helps people get through the holiday season without packing on the pounds.

of all ages, from 59 countries around the world, participated in the 2004 Holiday Challenge. And more than 80 percent of those rowers completed the challenge.

Gene Peters, 70, and his wife, Doris, went to extraordinary lengths (and miles) to complete their Holiday Challenges. The couple was en route to Scottsdale, Arizona, in their RV, and while one spouse drove, the other rowed.

"We did it because of its basic tenet: It's a challenge," said Gene. "And if we don't accept and complete challenges in our lives, then we will grow too old too fast."

Complete instructions and rules for the 2005 Holiday Challenge can be found online at www.concept2.com. This year's challenge will, as always, start on Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 24).

"That's when people need it the most," said Geer. "It's a great way to burn off that Thanksgiving turkey dinner!"