

What sailing from NZ to Fiji with almost no sailing experience taught me about health and wellness

Holistic Physiotherapist and wellness consultant spills her lessons

Holistic Physiotherapist and wellness consultant Caitlin Reid loves a good adventure, so when her boyfriend decided they should get a sailboat and sail from New Zealand to Fiji, she jumped at the chance.

After just four sailing lessons, the crew of three with limited sailing experience between them set sail for Savu Savu, Fiji from Opuia, New Zealand. During the ten-day passage, Caitlin was surprised to learn some valuable wellness lessons:

1. Sometimes you just need to take a leap

Caitlin's retreats are as much about self worth as they are about eating and moving well, and she looks at social trends to understand the origin around the issues many of her attendees face.

"The feeling of needing to 'do more' or 'be more' than we are stops so many of us from achieving exciting things. This need to have 'more' of something is everywhere, people may want:

- More patience before they have children
- More money before they pursue their dream job
- More activewear before they go to the gym

As a physiotherapist I've heard every excuse to avoid rehab or activity, (including the one about active wear!) We're all guilty of making those little excuses without realising they hold us back," said Caitlin.

"The feeling that we don't have quite ENOUGH OF SOMETHING YET all comes down to confidence. It's the little voice in our head saying 'no, you can't do it...not yet,'" said the physio.

Sailing the Pacific Ocean with limited experience taught her that taking an informed leap is sometimes the best option. She researched safety tools, did the required Advanced Sea Survival course and passed the Category One safety inspection. After all these aspects, she felt ready.

"Sure it was a big leap after just four lessons, but I learned sometimes you've just got to give it a go," said Caitlin.

2. Eating fried, fatty foods is hard on your digestion

"This is a no brainer, but I had never felt the truth of this statement until arriving in Fiji," said Caitlin.

During the passage from NZ, the crew ate only clean whole foods including rice, beans, cabbage, vegetables, pasta and freshly caught Skipjack and

Yellowfin tuna. After arriving in Fiji in a boat soaked through thanks to big waves on the last few days, all she wanted was a warm burger and chips. After a few days of sleep and recovery, she and the crew wandered to Waitui marina to satisfy their craving.

"The next day, we both felt sluggish and lazy, almost worse than the day we had arrived after very little sleep at sea. I was blown away with the difference in our energy levels," said Caitlin.

As a wellness consultant and Physiotherapist, clean, whole foods are a huge part of Caitlin's recommendation repertoire, but she was amazed at the visible physiological effects an absence from any processed and fatty foods had on her energy.

"The occasional dumpling night or burger and chips is absolutely fine, but notice if you're injecting fried and fatty foods into your diet elsewhere. It could be making you lethargic without you realising," said Caitlin.

3. Not sweating the small stuff is key to contentment

The fatigue of doing watches in shifts of four hours during the day, and just three hours at night took its toll on the crew. Not because of the waves that soaked the cockpit and knocked them out of bed one night, or the gusting winds, but because of the compounding lack of sleep.

"We were so tired. We had never done anything like that before, and I always slept lightly in case the person on watch yelled out and needed me," said Caitlin.

Caitlin always asks patients about the quality of their sleep if their recovery has stagnated, or they are struggling with chronic pain or anxiety around an injury, so the link between mental function and sleep is apparent to her.

"I know that after 19 hours without sleep, your brain functions as it would with a blood alcohol level of 0.05. After ten days of broken, light sleep, I noticed we weren't so good at communicating anymore."

In this state of fatigue, Caitlin learned perhaps the most valuable lesson of all.

"In this somewhat extreme environment, I learned that not sweating the small stuff made everyday easier, for everyone.

The little things don't matter in the middle of the Pacific, but they also don't matter at home. Choosing to let small things slide helped us arrive safely and happily in Fiji, and I have learned it will also help me achieve other goals with family and friends at home."

Caitlin was thrilled to arrive safely in Fiji with her friend and boyfriend, and couldn't wait to share her wellness learnings from this exciting adventure. Learn more about Caitlin and her international invitations at some of the world's best luxury resorts here: www.aprivewellness.com/about

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