

# POLO TIMES



**VICTORY FOR ENGLAND**

*King's Coronation Cup*

**2023 PONY CLUB POLO CHAMPIONSHIPS**

*Results, Awards & Best Playing Ponies*

**CLUB SPOTLIGHT**

*Cheshire Polo Club*

**PLUS: Talacrest Prince of Wales's Championship Cup & Don't Forget to Defend**



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Ollie Cudmore scores for England in The King's Coronation Cup. By The Art Of Polo/ Hurlingham Polo Association

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Understanding what it takes to overcome fear and self-doubt has been at the root of Paul 'Stalkie' Stalker's personal transformation. He has proven experience of working with Polo Teams, Patrons and individual players for the past three years achieving outstanding results. With individual clients, Stalkie's aim is to untap, nurture and focus their passion and potential on becoming the best versions of themselves in all aspects of their lives, whatever their starting point



# Importance of Your Fuel

## Control & manage your energy for peak polo performance

Martin Perez, trainer of La Indiana and Norberto Imas (personal trainer to Mariano Aguerre and many other world-class polo players), were just two of the Personal Trainers (PT) who motivated me to enter the world of polo. Both were key advocates in moving polo towards a more professional approach at all levels.

When Perez first started in the game, he was one of the most visible trainers out there working with players, but now it's common practice to see players warming up, stretching and doing proper cool downs and post-match recovery sessions with professional trainers. "Players now see the real benefits of workouts tailor made for them, that work around their goals and their lives – and the sport is all the better and safer for it", says Perez, "always bearing in mind everything else that they do, (how many horses they've ridden that day, practices, stick-and-ball sessions, when they're next playing etc.), I work hardest on flexibility. This is one of the cornerstones of polo fitness and its importance to players of all levels cannot be overstated".

With an increasing focus on the physical wellbeing of polo players, the mental and attitudinal benefits exponentially increase

too. This has now opened the eyes of patrons, coaches and players to the gains in performance that mindset coaching can provide to them and their teams.

As Norberto explains, "It is noticeable that when players are in good physical condition, they feel more confident and secure in themselves. They know that they are prepared to take on any situation that they might face in a game. They feel more motivated when they are physically and mentally balanced and enjoy every match and challenge even more. There are so many benefits to following a training plan, but I think the most important ones are based in injury prevention and lengthening a player's career as well as the mental side".

Over 20 years ago a specialist told me that I had around three months to live and I was placed in the Priory Hospital to see out my last days. This was due to a very aggressive form of cancer, the inability of my body to cope with the conventional treatment I was receiving and the fearful, traumatic thoughts that dominated my mind.

The reason I'm still here to tell the tale is because of the dramatic turnaround in the way I treated my mind and body.

My breakthrough was marshalled by my inspirational mentor, Dr. Rosy Daniel ([www.drrosydaniel.org](http://www.drrosydaniel.org)). Rosy is an Integrative Medical Consultant whose intimate knowledge of nutrition, complementary therapy and the mind-body connection has helped thousands of people to achieve optimum levels of energy, health and wellbeing – something that every polo player, every elite sports player, can benefit from.

Since defying the odds to conquer cancer, I've been able to push myself to new physical limits. I regularly compete in international endurance events – particularly cycling and swimming – that are considered beyond the capabilities of most sportspeople of my age. What I've learned is by seriously valuing your physical and mental health, you will sustain a fulfilling and rewarding sports career.

That's why, when working with my stable of polo teams and individual players, I work with the team's physical coach and a nutritionist to map out the basic physical activities and diet that each player can incorporate into their lives. The outcome is to build outstanding health and energy levels, not just for elite polo playing but for the quality of their lives outside the sport.

My nutritionist will devise plans based on each player's measurements and needs which become a vital part of building their strength and aiding recovery, allowing them to feel their best. In my time as a polo mindset coach, I can recall so many tense matches that have been won in the final chukka due to the winning team's superior mental and physical resilience – it's a no-brainer investment for any ambitious patron.

At RAISE Polo our nutritional plan focuses on three key principles:

- 1. Nourishing your body with healthy food and drink**
- 2. Keeping your body fit and relaxed**
- 3. Freeing your body of toxic chemicals**

This is a massively important subject which I only have space here to give you the headlines of, but if you'd like to drill down further then please go to [www.raisepolo.com](http://www.raisepolo.com) where you can find out much more.

### Nourishing your body with healthy food and drink:

Most of us have a basic understanding of what we should and shouldn't eat and drink, but knowing and doing are two different sides of the coin!

A game-changer for me was to replace refined and processed foods with the wholefood, unprocessed equivalent.





Photography by Raise Polo

Emilor use personal trainers to make key performance gains

When I learned that there were over 5,000 chemicals used in processed foods, I moved to eating 'live' food and fresh, organic produce.

Nutritionists encourage eating 'live food' which has not had the life cooked out of it. When processed, the good things in these foods effectively die, becoming useless at protecting us from disease. The aim is to ensure you include live fresh food with every single meal. This means avoiding food that is microwaved, processed, deep fried, smoked, char-grilled, irradiated, frozen or chemically enhanced – as this ensures all the beneficial living vitamins, minerals, enzymes and phytonutrients are intact.

Foods that are live include fresh vegetables, fruits, salads, nuts and seeds, fresh cereals and grains. The plant nutrients in these foods have been shown to reverse the formation of cancer cells by repairing the genetic material in the cell nucleus.

Many of our most common degenerative diseases such as cancer, heart disease and arthritis, are caused by our bodies being too acidic. Unfortunately, a lot of the things we consume are 'lifestyle choices' which acidify the body such as alcohol, tea, coffee and fizzy drinks, dairy food, red meat, processed food, fast food, citrus fruit and berries.

To counteract acidity in your diet, the most alkalising foods are vegetables, particularly leafy greens like kale, chard and cabbage, as well as pulses, nuts, seeds, grains and cereals and fruits such as melon, banana, papaya, dates and figs.

Your body is constantly trying to maintain an alkaline balance. Your cells work very hard to keep you healthy, but if you are consistently too acidic it increases the likelihood of illness. Further information on the benefits of an alkaline diet can be found at: [www.americannutritionassociation.org](http://www.americannutritionassociation.org) and [www.diabetes.co.uk](http://www.diabetes.co.uk)

I highly recommend juicing large quantities of non-acidic fruit and vegetables which breaks the nutrient goodies out of their cellulose fibre casing and turns them into a form that the body can easily digest. Juicing gets all the nutritious substances that your body craves without having to chew your way through kilos of raw veg. A glass of vegetable juice a day can quickly restore the essential alkaline balance in your body.

Get yourself a juice extractor, or better still use a juice press. Juicing every day became a key part of restoring my immune system when I was a dying man.

A useful exercise to see where you currently are on the nutrition spectrum is to write down everything that you have consumed over the last two days. Highlight the live foods – the fruits, raw or lightly steamed/stir fried vegetables, salads, nuts, seeds and raw cereals in your diet.

If you are eating 70 percent live food or more, then you are on the right track. If you are eating 10 percent live, it's a lot better than 0% and it is a starting point to improve your score.

Correct hydration is a polo player's best friend. It is essential to peak performance.

The brain is 95 percent water, the lungs are 90 percent, blood is 83 percent and muscles are 76 percent, this is why we need to have a recommended daily intake of quality, filtered water. Whenever you become ill, the first thing you're told is to make sure you drink lots of water, so that all the toxins which have built up overnight from the chemical processes of the body can be flushed out of the tissues.

Factors that affect hydration are how much you sweat during playing, the temperature and humidity you're playing in and the length of the game. You need additional fluids to replace the water lost in sweat. Failing to do this can not only lead to cramps but will stop your body from recovering efficiently which in turn makes you more susceptible to injury.

Aim to drink three litres of good quality (filtered or spring) water per day. Electrolyte drinks help to replenish water, electrolytes and energy lost during playing.

### Keeping your body fit and relaxed:

To achieve optimum health, we all need to understand our relationship with the basic elements of our personal ecosystem, starting with oxygen. When you breathe in oxygen, its energy couples with a molecule called Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP), known in biochemistry as the 'molecular currency' of energy transfer between cells. It's like a battery for the body, storing and transporting chemical energy within cells.

As well as getting the vital oxygen to power your body's engine, there's much scientific evidence to suggest that spending time amongst nature breathing in clean oxygen encourages relaxed feelings and well-being in us all.

Our Japanese friends have known this for years and they practice 'shinrin-yoku' which means 'forest-bathing' (taking time

to walk in forested areas). Scientists have established that forest environments reduce concentrations of our stress hormone cortisol, it lowers pulse rate and blood pressure, promoting greater nerve activity than urban environments. There are now more than 50 official Forest Therapy trails in Japan.

This is a great reminder of what an amazing sport polo is. We get to spend vast periods of time outside in green spaces, so we must take advantage of it, breathing deeply to fill our bodies with clean oxygen – polo shinrin-yoku!

### Freeing your body of toxic chemicals

When committing to an optimum healthy lifestyle, you must look to decrease the harmful toxins that you take in that poison your cells.

The main toxins to avoid are:

- Chemical food additives that extend shelf life, 'enhance' colour and flavour
- Foods which are chargrilled or smoked, which have a higher possibility of containing carcinogenic substances
- An excess of fat, sugar, salt, protein and caffeine
- Excess alcohol and nicotine – the two most common toxins which destroy our bodies' health. Beware of an excess of fat, sugar, salt, protein and caffeine
- Excess use of non-vital medication which may interfere with cell function or give you unwanted side effects (eg painkillers)

In short, the simple rule is to avoid an excess of all the above.

There are numerous benefits of specific polo coaching, both physical and mental, regardless of handicap, budget or time constraints. When these filter through all levels of our beautiful game, it becomes even more attractive to future generations. Kudos goes to all trainers who are working to make polo players quicker, stronger, safer, happier, resilient role models. ✖

Hosted by mindset and wellbeing expert Paul 'Stalkie' Stalker, Club Raise will bring together individuals who share a passion for polo, but also share a passion for achieving optimum health and wellbeing.

Whether you're a player, parent of a polo player, patron, coach or simply a fan who's passionate about the sport, Stalkie and his RAISE Polo team have created three transformative online courses, launching in September 2023. The courses are specifically designed to sharpen and sustain mind, body and wellbeing, to enhance your love of the game, to network with like-minded people and achieve outstanding performance on and off the polo field.

Visit [www.raisepolo.com](http://www.raisepolo.com) and enter your details following the 'Book Your Free Discovery Call' link to discover the profound difference that Stalkie's coaching can make to your life.