

Moanui sweet cherry powder

Anyone who's been following their food blogs might have heard of the power of tart cherries. They contain natural melatonin, which, among other things, is a key compound that regulates stress, enhances sleep and may boost the immune system.

Thanks to overhead depletion of the ozone layer, meaning higher UVB light, New Zealand's sweet cherries have a far higher melatonin concentration than tart cherries, or almost any other natural source, and are also bursting with antioxidants. Furthermore, the anti-inflammatory qualities of these cherries' anthocyanins are comparable to over-the-counter drugs.



Now a company called Fruision has produced a freeze-dried powder capsule supplement which condenses these qualities further, and keeps them active. It's called Cherr-x, and is only available from the NZ stockist Moanui.

For NZ\$40 (about €25, or US\$30) you get a jar of 60 x 500mg capsules - about a month's supply. I've been taking a gram a day for a couple of months now, and I seem to be able to recover quicker from the harder 3-session training days. Levels of perceived stress have been reduced as well, although there are other variables that could be involved in this.

So if you'll accept this non-peer-reviewed appraisal from an ex-biologist and athlete then the product is well-worth trying! Especially if you are trying to balance a heavy work load with hard training, and your sleep is having to pay the bill for it all!

LINKS: [PDF of Cherr-x](#) [Moanui website](#)

Dread, and other stimuli

Dear weakest link,

Today I discovered who you are and where you live. Rest assured that I'm going to be coming round very often from now on, to chat and get to know you better. With time we'll become best friends, in fact we'll be inseparable. Then I'll be able to start calling you 'strength'...

*Yours sincerely,
WT.*



There is that moment when you realise that a skill that you'd really like to possess is very difficult for you, or when you realise that you're putting off doing something because you dread it: in that moment you have actually been profoundly empowered. You now possess the knowledge of *what needs to be done*.

In that moment two paths (briefly) open up for you: in one you tell yourself you really ought to put more time into it in the future, but for now you're just going to carry on with what you've been doing for a bit longer; in the second you turn the full glare of your undivided attention onto that one facet, there in that very moment.

So if you feel *dread* of anything in training, whether it's a particular exercise, training table, stretch or type of dive, then that is the calling card of a weakest link. Analyse it, isolate it, and make a commitment - *the type of commitment you know you can't break* - to turn it into your strength. Then begin.



I had this revelation recently with training for the monofin kick. Most of my training tables are designed to be as hard as I can manage, but I realised that I couldn't even stomach the idea of doing a dolphin kick table without fins of any kind for propulsion. My barefoot dolphin kick technique used to be so shocking that I would just lie there in the pool and wiggle my hips without any forwards movement (but occasionally some backwards). These days it is at a point where I can swim a lap in a semi-respectable time, but still with major expenditure of energy. So the idea of doing a table of repeated swims like this, with short recoveries between them, well it wasn't just that I thought that it would be hard, but I doubted altogether that it would be possible for me. As soon as I realised that I had this belief I set out to prove myself wrong. Having now completed some of these tables, I know that I was wrong, but I still have a long way to go before I can think of calling this a strength. Ask me about it again in a year!

So, can't get your arms into a streamlined position above your head? You could swim with your hands by your sides, or you can start stretching those lats and shoulders and not stop until you can lie one forearm on top of the other.

Hate doing CO2 tables because they are so claustrophobic and bothersome? Look under the rug and your weakest link is hiding there, waiting to pounce. Start conservative and build the tables into a powerhouse of training stimuli.

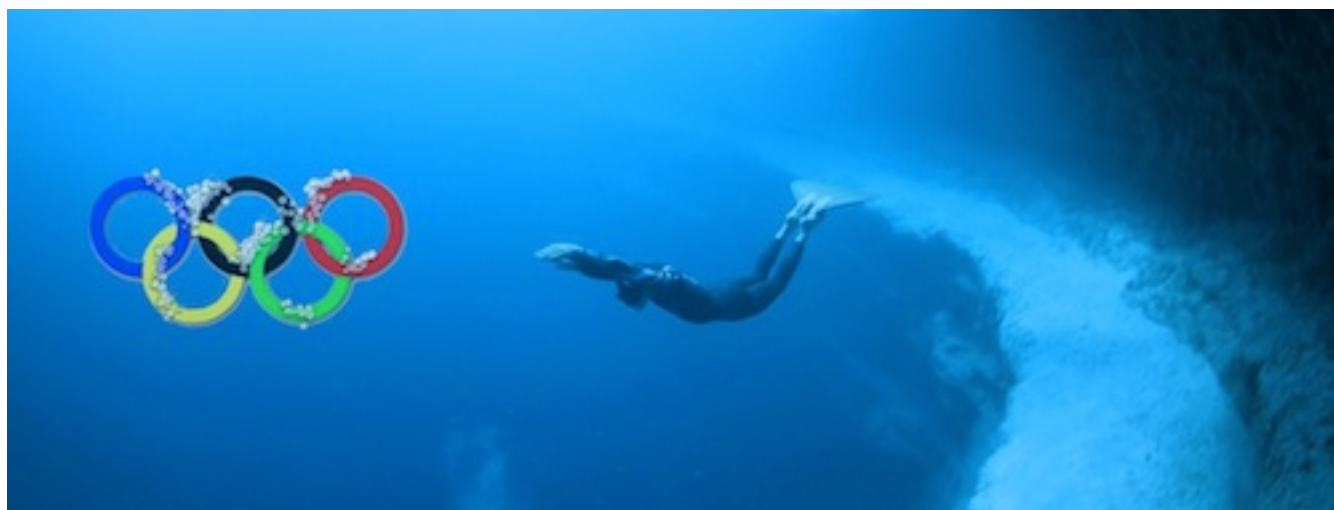
Don't think you have a weakest link? *Maybe that is it...*



Faster, higher, stronger... deeper?

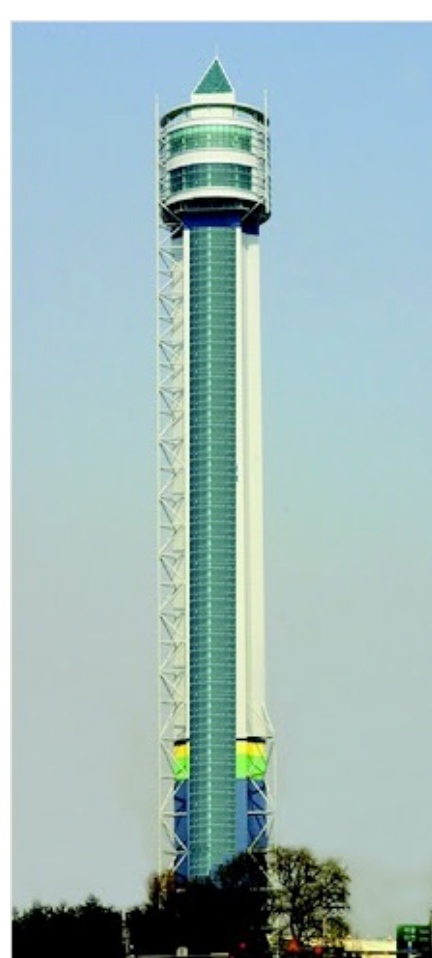
Could freediving ever be an Olympic sport?

Every four years that well-handled question re-surfaces for fresh debate. By now I've had some occasion to practice an answer, and it normally goes along the lines of:



"Yes, I think it should be an Olympic sport, since it is the only purely aquatic sport (all the others take place on the boundary between air and water, and are thus semi-aquatic at best), and thus the only real measure of human aquatic potential. Sure, the depth disciplines might present some logistical problems for an Olympic organiser, but at least dynamic apnea wouldn't require anything more than a tape measure stretched along the edge of the Olympic pool."

After being awed and inspired by 2012 Olympic games, and marvelling at the technical wizardry, purpose-built venues and attention to detail, I no longer think that even the depth disciplines are out of the reach of an Olympic organiser, in any venue. If a churning whitewater rapid can be constructed in the fields of London suburbia, and an entire stadium can be built just for cycling races, then why not a 130 meter tall tower with glass viewing panels?



Thinking that it would require foot-thick glass at the base, where 14 atmospheres of water pressure would be weighing down, I looked up the specs of tempered glass and found that even inch-thick tempered glass could support thousands of PSI (it would only need to support 250). Furthermore the structure could be made so that it could be dismantled and sold to the next Olympic host (or used as a very deep submarine escape training tank!)

This may answer the questions of 'could' and 'should' the sport be part of the Olympics, but to the question *'will it be,'* there is currently still only one regrettable answer...

Until freediving sheds the unflattering and outdated skin of sled-diving, and allows itself to blossom into both a widespread recreational activity and bonafide sport, then it will always be coloured with the monikers 'extreme,' or even 'death wish.' And you don't see those kind of sports in the Olympic roster.

It would be a long and laborious obstacle course even to get dynamic apnea eligible for selection in the 2020 Olympics (disciplines for Rio in 2016 have already been decided, with rugby and golf(!) as new additions). Realistically, even if the sport does continue to grow and reaches the point where monofins don't get suspicious looks in the airport, there is still no chance that anyone will be awarded a 'deepest' gold medal before 2024.

Mind you, those games are likely to be held in Paris, and if any nation might get behind the inclusion of our sport then it would be the French.

Although by then the tower might need to be taller than 130 meters...