

'HOW I BUILD MY BODY'

Lynn Jung
**Professional
freerunner**

Credentials: One of the Parkour scene's leading female athletes worldwide; the first and only woman ever to join prestigious London-based team Storm Freerun; winner of 'Best Female Freerunner' at the Red Bull Art of Motion competition 2016; star of multiple advertising campaigns, TV shows and films.

SKILLS

'Being a Parkour athlete is like being a skateboarder: you get better by going out and practising. That said, I'm 31 and I've had a few injuries, so now I look after my body with a strength and cardio regime that 90 per cent of freerunners wouldn't consider doing. During the winter, I spend a lot of time in gyms but, when the sun comes out, I can spend an entire day outside without realising how much I've worked – I tend to wake up the next day, see how my body feels and then decide if I'll train again. I come from a gymnastics and dance background, and while I'm not the most powerful athlete, my way of moving is fluid and graceful. I spend lots of time drilling jumps, so my movements look effortless.'

MIND

'You have to train your mind as much as your body. Being an all-round, well-skilled Parkour athlete means being able to adapt to different architectures and coming up with

a challenge that's unique to that location. You then need the focus and mental ability to break that challenge down into stages – while understanding your physical capabilities and limitations – before stringing them together. You don't just run and jump. It's about connecting movements together perfectly.'

STRENGTH

'I put a lot of effort into conditioning my body, doing three weightlifting sessions a week (finishing with 20 minutes of cardio) so that my body is stronger and better able to withstand high-impact landings. Working on my explosive power is essential to becoming a better freerunner, but I need to avoid getting carried away as being heavier can take away from my Parkour ability. If I sustain a lower-body injury, I'll swap jumping and lifting for yoga and hand-balancing exercises.'

RECOVERY

'After suffering various injuries, I now understand that rest days are beneficial, so I have at least one a week and use a foam roller after training to massage tight muscles. I've always eaten healthily but I didn't always eat enough, so I now count my calories to ensure I'm taking on enough fuel for my training. I'm not the greatest chef so my meals can be pretty basic, but they contain all the nutrients I need, and I'd say around 20 per cent of my daily intake now comes from good fats.'

VITAL KIT

'You don't need much kit for Parkour, but I recommend that you use chalk to improve your grip and wear a pair of lightweight shoes. Choose a style with rubber soles, as foam soles can rip very easily and wear out fast. Some freerunners train in minimalist barefoot shoes but I prefer something with more support and cushioning to protect against impact. My go-to training shoe is the Reebok Classic Nylon Shoe (£55; reebok.co.uk) and I pray they're never discontinued.'



WHY TRY FREERUNNING?

- 'I find freerunning to be very empowering. I'm a naturally introverted person but Parkour has really helped build my confidence. It's also very liberating because there are so few rules.'
- 'It's satisfying to find challenges and work on them – some only take a few minutes to complete, while others take months of physical and mental preparation to work up to.'
- 'Parkour allows me to explore all sorts of movements and find the niche I feel most comfortable in. You can decide where to invest your efforts and ditch the aspects you don't enjoy.'
- 'The Parkour community is very welcoming and does its best to get more women involved, so I'd recommend you get started by finding a local class or group via Facebook, Instagram or Parkour UK (parkour.uk).'



WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth. PHOTOGRAPHY: Hummel