

# SUMMER SPORT ISSUE

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Karen Cockburn at Underpass Park, where street artists transformed highway pillars into works of art as part of the Pan Am Path, a city-spanning recreational trail. Photo: May Truong

## She's got game

**KAREN COCKBURN, 34**  
**TRAMPOLINE**

With the Pan Am Games upon us, we look to three participating athletes for their tips on what to wear for peak personal style and performance

BY JEN MASSEAU

*Athleisure* as a fashion term has never been more relevant. Wearing workout gear outside the gym is a trend that scores points for style: Athletic leggings have replaced denim as the default casual bottom, and the sports bra is a more visible and vibrant alternative to restrictive underwiring.

Interest in women's professional sports is seeing a boost, too: Last month's opening game of the FIFA Women's World Cup soccer tournament in Edmonton drew 53,058 spectators—the largest crowd ever for

a national sporting event in Canada of any kind, let alone one featuring female athletes.

All this enthusiasm for women's sport and sportswear had us wondering: What do female athletes really wear—when they're in competition, at leisure and everything in between? With the Pan American Games happening in Toronto from July 10 to 26 and the Parapan Am from August 7 to 15, we asked three competitors to chat about their personal style and wardrobe choices, for both on duty and off.

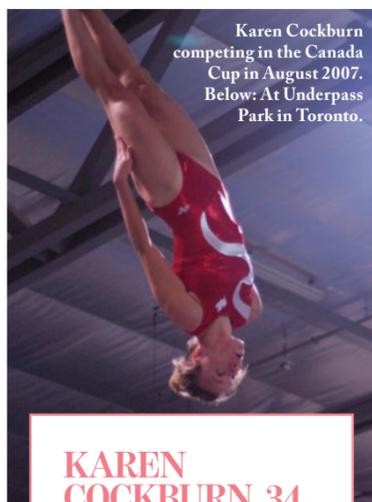
**Highlight reel:** A three-time Olympic medallist, Cockburn has two silvers (Athens and Beijing) and a bronze (Sydney) to her name. After taking time off to have a daughter in 2013, and then returning only to break her ankle prepping for the world trampoline championships last November, she's excited to compete on home turf at the Pan Ams this year.

**The gear:** For competitions, all female trampolinists must wear a leotard or unitard. Cockburn says most choose a tank-style leotard: "It's easier for our arm motion when jumping." Fit is priority one: "You want it to be fitted and tight, so it won't give you a wedgie or something when you're performing."

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## She's got game



Karen Cockburn competing in the Canada Cup in August 2007. Below: At Underpass Park in Toronto.

**KAREN COCKBURN, 34**  
TRAMPOLINE  
Hometown: Stouffville, Ont.



LULULEMON ENERGY SPORTS BRA, \$48, SWIFTLY TANK, \$48, INSPIRE TIGHTS II, \$102, LULULEMON.COM. NIKE VEST, \$125, SPORTINGLIFE.CA. NIKE LUNARGLIDES 6, \$140, NIKE STORES

For international competitions where she's representing Canada, red and white is a must. "Sometimes we add crystals for a bit of pizzazz. It's a judged sport, so appearance matters. [My teammates and I] work with the girl who designs the suits. She sends us designs, colours, fabrics. We choose our favourite—what we're going to feel good and confident performing in."

Leotards are for competition only—for training, fitted gym apparel rules. Cockburn's go-to brands are Lululemon and Under Armour. "Usually we wear tight or fitted shorts and either tank tops or sports bras, depending how hot it is at the gym—we don't have air conditioning."

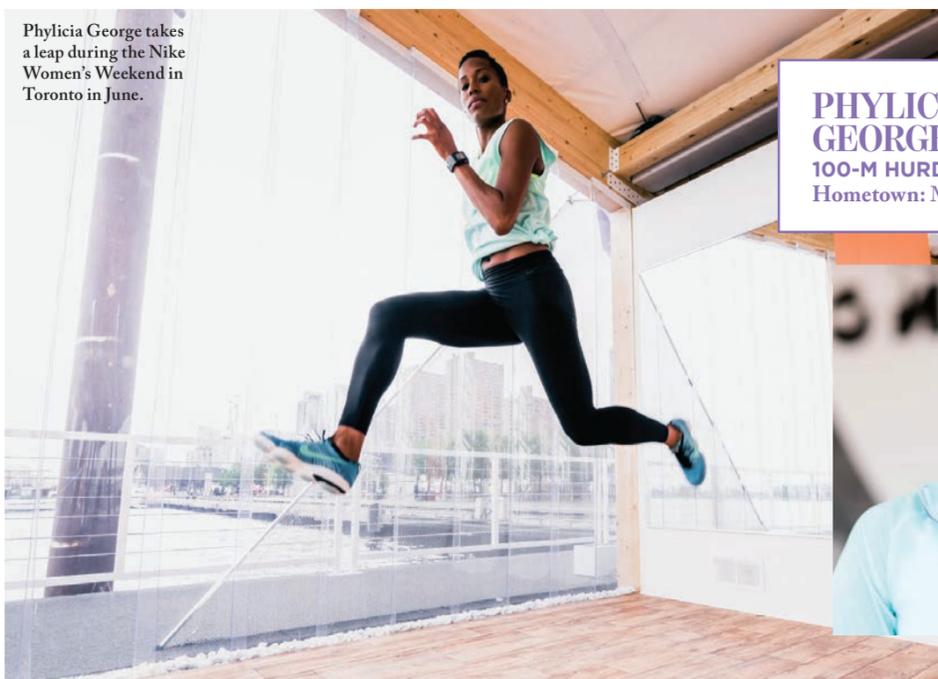
**Footwear:** Rubber-soled gymnastics slippers are required for competition. Some of Cockburn's teammates go barefoot in practice, but she wears them every time she jumps. "I feel like I have better grip," she says, and without them, "it hurts my feet too much. [The trampoline] feels almost like jumping on a cheese grater.... It can be pretty painful."

**Wardrobe malfunctions:** Undergarments pose particular problems. Rules dictate that nothing can show outside the leotard—even an errant sports-bra strap results in deductions from the judges' score. "I've seen lots of times when people's sports bras are showing, or their underwear is hanging out. Or people who've chosen white suits that are see-through, and it's like 'Oh, geez...'"

**Off-duty style:** "I'm really sad because I haven't been able to wear high heels since I broke my ankle." Cockburn's a girlie-girl at heart. "It's so fun that I have a daughter; I buy her so many clothes—she loves dresses. I'm so happy that she's girlie. I obviously don't dress up often...but when I get to, I like getting my hair done, my nails done. We get invited to lots of galas. It's fun to get dressed up and go to those things."



POINTE STUDIO SOCKS, \$12, POINTE-STUDIO.COM. LULULEMON SPLIT SECOND SHORTS, \$54, LULULEMON.COM. LISA MARIE FERNANDEZ BODYSUIT, \$403, NET-A-PORTER.COM



Phylicia George takes a leap during the Nike Women's Weekend in Toronto in June.

**PHYLICIA GEORGE, 27**  
100-M HURDLES  
Hometown: Markham, Ont.



**Highlight reel:** In 2012, George came first in the 100-m dash at the Canadian National Championships and took the top spot in the 100-m hurdles at the same event in 2014. From there, she chose to focus her career on hurdles, coming in sixth at the London Olympics. After (hopefully) conquering the track at the Pan Ams, she has her sights set on Rio in 2016.

**The gear:** "I like to have lots of layers, especially training in Canada; you never really know what to expect," says George. "A sports bra and shorts are my base layer; then I'll wear a T-shirt and long-sleeved top and long tights overtop. As I warm up, I'm slowly taking off layers throughout the practice." And, since her practice track is outdoors, she always has a rain jacket in her gym bag, just in case the weather turns.

Once she's warm, her choice of shorts is important: "I don't like my shorts to be super long—I prefer the Nike Pro 3-inch shorts. [The fabric] is thinner. I like to feel like I don't have much on, or much holding me back. We're dealing with tenths of thousandths of a second; I always try to feel really free and aerodynamic."

For race day, her uniform is a cropped top (with built-in sports bra) and a pair of "buns," or racing briefs. "For me, as a hurdler, I especially like the briefs because I like to feel like my legs are free. It's a small, minute detail, but I prefer it."

**"Track is very much like an ego sport. It's about thinking you're the best, thinking you can do anything. So when you have the gear on top of that, it gives you that little extra."**

**Footwear:** "I usually train in either Nike Vomeros or Pegasus. I supinate [run with most of the weight on the outside of the foot] when I run, so I can't be in a shoe that has too much stability. I don't ever want to feel like I'm in a big clunky shoe, especially when I'm doing my tempo runs"—when she's getting her speed up without hurdles.

"For my spikes, I run in the Nike Superfly R4. I really like these because the spike plate is very rigid, and I feel like it helps me with my force into the ground. As a sprinter and a hurdler, I like having [the outsole of the shoe] be a bit stiffer, because I'm very aggressive off the ground, and when I'm landing off of the hurdles, I don't want my heel to collapse onto the ground."

**Style confidence:** "I have a little saying: 'Look good, feel good. Feel good, run fast.' You can't help but feel confident when you look well put together. I usually do some-

thing bright or really super-patterned. That's one thing I love about Nike," says George, who is sponsored by the brand. "They have so many things that are funky and so many things that stand out, but they're also functional at the same time."

**Beauty routine:** When asked if she wears makeup when she runs, George laughs. "I do, actually. Especially like for race day, I am glammed out. I think of my racing as almost like performances. So the same way you might get ready going on stage, that's the way I treat my races. I'll do a full

face, you know, eyeshadow, a smoky eye, eyelashes, lipstick, sometimes...."

George isn't the only one, she says. "Especially in hurdles, it's kind of funny; it's like a beauty school in the hurdles. Across sport, I think sprints do too." (When you run as fast as she does, your makeup doesn't have time to melt off.)

"If you know you're going to be on TV, like for Pan Ams, World Championships or Olympics, then a lot of people will put a little extra effort to make sure they look good."

**Off-duty style:** George keeps her style sporty in her daily life too. "I do love dressing up on occasion when it calls for it, but if I'm just lounging around the house, or running to the store, I like being comfortable." But don't confuse casual with boring: "I still like to stand out. I do a lot of neons and that kind of thing."



NIKE AIR ZOOM PEGASUS 32 SHOES, \$140, DRI-FIT TANK TOP, \$42, PRO CLASSIC LOGO BRA, \$45, NIKE STORES

**ASHLEY STEACY, 28**  
RUGBY SEVENS  
Hometown: Lethbridge, Alta.

**Highlight reel:** Steacy was recently named the top women's player in her sport by Rugby Canada and served as team captain at the World Rugby series earlier this spring. This year is the first time women's rugby will be included in the Pan Am Games.

**The gear:** "Our kit's fit is really big in our game. It's a contact sport, and being comfortable is really a big part of it." The Canadian Rugby Team's kits are manufactured and designed by Under Armour. "Since we partnered with them, they've given us a bit of input into how the jersey is made. One of the big things we asked for was a really comfortable collar. They have a really nice material that fits around our necks," she says, which is important when an opposing player is tugging on a player's top to pull her to the ground. Another innovation is the jersey: "It's made of material that's almost a bit slippery, so it's harder for our opponents to tackle us, which helps us perform to the best we can."

Training gear differs from game-day outfits: "We usually wear a reversible singlet so we can play teams. Training shorts are a little bit stretchier...more durable, more sturdy, with lots of give in them so you can move while tackling or being tackled."

**Footwear:** "I just got my first pair of Under Armour cleats [similar to soccer cleats] a couple of months ago, and I absolutely love them. They're sending me a pair of the new SpeedForm boots next—I'm really excited to try those as well."



Ashley Steacy takes a tackle from Jessica Javelet of the United States during the IRB Women's Sevens World Series in 2014 in Kennesaw, Georgia. Right: Steacy after the World Rugby Women's Sevens Series in Amsterdam in May.

**"Our kit's fit is really big in our game. It's a contact sport, and being comfortable is really a big part of it."**

**High-tech undergarment:** In addition to a supportive sports bra, Steacy and her teammates layer on a second bra fitted with a GPS unit for both practice and games. "They track our performance: How much work we do during training loads, games... to see if we're being efficient on the field."

**Off-duty style:** "Pretty casual—I usually throw on a pair of tights to go shopping, to the movies, whatever. When you're in a training environment, you don't really feel like putting on a pair of jeans. Looking at my closet, I have all my 'normal' clothes that I bought years ago, and I hardly ever wear them." However, "when I do get the opportunity to dress up, I love to. Any time I go to a banquet, I buy a new dress. My husband hates how many dresses I've worn once in my lifetime."

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