

# GET A GRIP WITH **ROWING**

**S**ome time ago I visited the chiropractor and during that consultation he recommended that I spend 20 minutes a day rowing to benefit my posture. My heart sank down into my runners as I thought that the recommended 20 minutes may as well be 2000 and no amount of upbeat music could save me from the agony ahead! Until you master the basic technique it's easy to think that rowing requires more work to be done by the upper body rather than the legs. In fact, it's more about the legs, and the arms are basically for follow through. These days I have a love/hate relationship with rowing, but I get in and do it and get all my clients to do it too!

Rowing is not only great training for posture, but a fantastic way of adding a new dimension to your routine. It's cardio and strength training all rolled into one. Before you strap in, read these tips below to make sure your technique is spot on:

## **1** DON'T GRIP TOO HARD

Keep enough grip so you don't lose the handle, but also not so much that you wear out your hands, your forearms start to ache or your palms get calluses.

## **2** DRIVE WITH YOUR LEGS

Rowing is mostly about your legs. Despite your natural instincts, your legs are far stronger than your arms and should be doing the vast majority of the work. You'll know you're doing it right if your quads and butt are toasted once you finish.

## **3** LEGS, HIPS, ARMS, ARMS, HIPS, LEGS

This is the sequence of rowing. If you reorganize the sequence, it doesn't work.

## **4** DRIVE STRAIGHT BACK

If you feel yourself lift off the seat, or worse, you pop off the seat and land on the rail, it's because you are pushing UP instead of back. Push straight back with a lifted chest and shoulders back and down.

## **5** DON'T LET YOUR BUTT GO SOLO

Don't shoot your butt back first. Keep your core engaged throughout the stroke. The angle of your back should not change as you drive with your legs. Said another way, the handle should travel in sync with your seat for the initial leg drive portion of the stroke.

## **6** DON'T PULL WITH YOUR ARMS

Keep your elbows straight as you drive your legs. Remember it's about your legs, not your arms. As soon as your arms bend, you've lost the ability to translate power from your legs.

## **7** KEEP YOUR ELBOWS RELAXED

Avoid lifting up your elbows but don't artificially tuck them in either. Keep them relaxed at a natural angle and no chicken wings.

## **8** DON'T SHRUG YOUR SHOULDERS UP

Focus on pulling your shoulder blades together behind you rather than pulling your shoulders UP into your ears as you drive back in the stroke.

## **9** PULL THE HANDLE TO THE BOTTOM OF YOUR RIBS

Think of the target line as being the base of your sternum or base of your sports bra... whichever analogy works for you.

## **10** FEEL THE CONNECTION THROUGH YOUR FEET

The whole way through the drive you should feel a solid connection between the balls of your feet and the footplates.

## **11** DON'T SLAM THE SEAT INTO YOUR HEELS

As you continue to move forward and return to the start of the stroke, you should stop when your shins are perpendicular to the ground and your heels are curled up off the footplates, but your seat should never run into your feet.

## **12** FOCUS ON CONSISTENT STEADY MOVEMENT

You are the master of the numbers on the computer screen, not the victim of them. Steady consistent movement will be more efficient. Remember you are on the "water" where smooth movement is rewarded. Smooth movement is fast and efficient. Jerky movements make waves and flip boats.

When you master the technique you feel like you're part of an unstoppable force. When that happens, rowing is pretty awesome. Hopefully these tips help YOU find that moment.



## JASMINE

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For further information, or to make an appointment, contact the Sports Counter at 6739-4312.