

# ADAPTING ROWING / RIGGING FOR MASTERS PHYSIOLOGY

Masters rowers fundamentally are no different from any other age group. However, regular competitors know that your strength and flexibility changes as you age and so it is helpful to re-assess rigging and boat set up regularly for masters training groups.

## Comfort in the Boat

The goal of rowing and sculling boat rigging for masters is twofold

1. Be able to move through the stroke cycle
2. Be comfortable while doing it

Let's start by reviewing the parts of a rowing boat which are capable of adjustment and the degree of difficulty involved in changing each.

- Oar length .....easy to change
- Oar inboard .....easy to change
- Oar handle size .....moderately difficult to change
- Seat height.....easy to change
- Slide / track position .....moderately difficult to change
- Foot Stretcher position...easy to change
- Shoe height.....moderately difficult to change
- Foot stretcher angle / rake.....hard to change
- Rigger pin position (span / spread).....hard to change
- Rigger pin pitch (fore/aft and lateral) .....hard to change
- Oarlock height .....easy to change

My assessment of easy / moderate / hard is based on the amount of time, tools and skill needed to make a change. For example, a club who uses snap-lock washers on the oarlocks will find it very easy to change the oarlock heights on the water.

Changing your slide position on the water is more challenging - but easy to do off the water with the boat on trestles. Adjusting the rigger pin takes tools, time and expertise and so is classified as hard.

Knowing what can be changed is a good starting point. Any change has to be made with reference to an "ideal" or preferred situation.

Therefore rowing groups should all know some basic principles of rigging which can be adapted for taller or shorter people.



## Key Rowing Rig Positions for athletes

1. Oar handle relative to the body at the finish (sweep and sculling)
2. Shoe height relative to seat height
3. Sill of oarlock relative to the water

## There are some fixed positions that rowers should be able to achieve

- Full compression at the catch, shins vertical, hips square off from the pin, oar spoons buried under the water
- At the sculling finish blades buried under the water, wrist and forearms flat, elbows at 90 degrees to the oar shaft, thumbs brushing your lower ribs
- At the sweep finish blades buried under the water, outside hand thumb brushes lower ribs
- Mid-recovery oar spoons capable of square blades above the water surface

These give you clear points in the rowing stroke cycle to check against what your athletes actually do when they are rowing. Note that many will be able to get into these positions when the boat is stationary, check if they actually do it while rowing continuously.

Read our list of Easy Rigging Fixes for you to try on our website [www.fastermastersrowing.com/adapting-rowing-rigging-for-masters-physiology](http://www.fastermastersrowing.com/adapting-rowing-rigging-for-masters-physiology)

Tell us what solutions you're finding that work for clubs and masters and share on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/rowingfaster](https://www.facebook.com/rowingfaster)

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