

MANAGING YOUR ROWING LIFE

From post-university rowers in their 20s to those in their 90s masters rowing encompasses a spectrum of ages, abilities, and events geared to each group.

Just as there is no “cookbook” approach to an elite athlete’s program, there is none for a masters athlete either. Each has their own goals and individual needs that have to be considered for their own rowing to be a successful experience.

This article will help you work out how to create balance in your training as a masters rower.

Many masters live busy lives and so a big part of your potential to enjoy rowing depends on making a “rowing shaped hole” in your diary. Rushed outings are not fun. You will find that you can enjoy your rowing more if your regular training fits into a framework of your choice. Later in this article is a questionnaire to help you work out your preferences and rowing choices.

Balance and flexibility are key

A masters athlete juggles family life, work, commuting, volunteer, and social commitments with training, sleep, travel, and racing. Your plan needs to work for you based on your weekly schedule, and your available time to train and your recovery ability. Your age, fitness level, and commitments away from the boat shed will impact your schedule and energy levels. Your energy comes from one source so keeping the scales on an even keel as much as possible will help you get the most out of your training and contribute to your greater sense of well-being.

Considerations for your personal programme

1. How would you describe yourself
 - a. A seasoned competitor, performance-oriented but aiming for only one or two events each season.
 - b. A novice rower just learning skills and eventually wanting to race.
 - c. Purely recreational more geared to fitness and good technique.
 - d. A “student of the sport” focused primarily on improving technique because you love drills and exercises.
 - e. Or a combination of the above.
2. Write down your regular weekly schedule and available time for training
 - a. Specify your preferred rest day(s) and any other set training sessions you have planned such as a crew boat outing or working with a trainer, or cross training.
 - b. Within the week, be sure you include the priority days, recovery days, and flexible days.
 - c. If your schedule needs to be re-arranged during a given week a flexible day can be an additional day off or a day for making up a priority workout that you missed.
3. What are your short-term racing and training goals for the next 6-12 months? Write them down.

4. What can you do physically and mentally to help yourself reach your goals?
5. How can you improve your technique in the boat?
6. How can you improve your race plan?
7. How can you improve your diet?
8. Do you feel you get enough recovery/sleep during the week?
9. What are you willing to do to achieve those goals?
 - a. lose weight
 - b. train harder
 - c. train more
 - d. invest in a better boat
 - e. recover more
 - f. take time off from work
 - g. take time away from home
 - h. all of the above or something else?
10. What resources are available to you to help you with your training and technique?
 - a. a rowing coach
 - b. personal trainer
 - c. sports nutritionist
 - d. a training programme
 - e. massage therapist
 - f. experienced rowers at your club

Now you should have both a framework of a regular diary days for training and also a view on how much you are prepared to change in order to facilitate your rowing. This will help you frame up the “essentials” and the “nice to haves” in your rowing. Remember these are personal choices - there are no right or wrong answers.

Do talk through your answers with your rowing friends. If several of you want to try something different like buying a training programme or hiring a coach or clubbing together to buy a boat - that can be easier if you share the costs.

Read more about what you should expect from rowing as you age on our website www.fastermastersrowing.com/managing-your-rowing-life

Tell us what solutions you’re finding that work for clubs and masters and share on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/rowingfaster

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