



REPETITIVE STRESS FACTORS

The injury rate in rowing is about 0.4 per 1,000 hours of training at the elite level.

Rates may be higher among non-elite recreational rowers but are far less than other sports such as (American) football at 4 per 1,000 hours of training or rugby at 40 per 1000 hours of training.

What causes rowing injuries?

Most rowing injuries are caused by the repetitive nature of the rowing stroke. Regardless of age, experience, or competitive level weaknesses, imbalances, or restrictions of muscles and joints can lead to overuse syndromes primarily affecting the neck, shoulders, elbows, ribs, low back, or hips. Repetitive stress or repetitive motion injuries develop because of microscopic tears in tissue or fractures in bone. When the body is unable to repair the damaged tissues inflammation occurs, leading to painful conditions.

You can test your physical restrictions in our [Functional Movement Assessment free webinar](#). [Click here](#).

Gender injury differences

Overuse injuries are more common in female than male rowers. In female rowers the most frequent complaints are chest wall pain (i.e. rib stress fractures), then low back pain, followed by tenosynovitis (inflammation of the tendon and enveloping sheath) of the wrist extensors.

In males, low back pain is most prevalent, then tenosynovitis of the wrist extensors, followed by chest wall pain. Sculling, sweep rowing, and erging are similar exercises but each discipline poses different risks due to the mechanics of the motion involved.

Factors contributing to repetitive stress injuries can be internal or external. Internal factors include your fitness level, core stability, muscle flexibility, nutrition, strength, hydration level, balance and coordination, recovery rate, age, rowing technique, posture, pre-existing injuries, emotional or perceived stress, and cross training.

External factors include a change in boat type or the size of your oars or oar handles, decreased boat stability, change in rigging, racing, changes in rowing technique, overtraining, rapid increases in training intensity, frequency, or duration, or a change from sweep to sculling, changes in seating position, change of athletes in the boat, and inadequate rest between training sessions.

To keep your training on track make changes to your program or equipment gradually including transitioning from the boat to the erg each fall (autumn).

Find out more on Repetitive Stress Factors on our website www.fastermastersrowing.com/repetitive-stress-factors

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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