



Statement on Backs

Guidelines from the ARA Medical Sub-Committee on the Avoidance of Back Pain

Take great care to maintain technique while weight and ergometer training.

Fatigue is a major risk factor for injury.

Take particular care when fatigued e.g. land training after long water sessions or during speed circuits.

A rower's maximum is the weight that can be lifted while maintaining perfect technique.

Good lifting technique helps to increase strength.

Poor lifting technique leads to increased injuries.

Ensure that gearing and duration of rowing allow the maintenance of good technique.

A short break for extension stretches is advised after more than one hour of rowing or 30 minutes of ergometer training. This involves lying face down and pushing the head and shoulders off the ground until the arms are straight, arching the back backwards without causing any pain and holding the stretch for 20 seconds.

Incorporate core stability exercises and stretching into the training programme.

Cross-training may reduce the incidence of low back pain.

Seek advice from a health professional if any pain lasts longer than 48 hours without showing signs of settling and be aware of training in persistent unnatural pain.

Ensure that any medication you take conforms with the ARA rules.

During rehabilitation from an old injury, build up carefully - taking particular care during long steady state rowing and standing starts. Alter the training programme to take account of previous injuries.

Previous injury is a strong predictor of future injury. Coaches and athletes are advised to keep an injury log. Statistically, rowing is one of the safest sports but we need to make it even safer.

ARA Medical Sub-Committee

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