



How much and how often?

Guidelines for junior training programmes

Age group	Number of coached sessions per week	Content and break down of the sessions	Comments
J11	No more than one.	Skills and technique.	Short sessions based on time on the water rather than distance covered.
J12	No more than two.	Skills and technique.	
J13	No more than three.	Two water. One land. Skills and training technique.	Remember that the children may have other activities that they participate in, such as music, scouts and other sports.
J14	No more than four.	Two/three water. One/two land. Skills and training technique.	
J15	Between four and six.	Four water. One/two land training. This may include weight-lifting technique only – please ensure that as a coach you are qualified to teach weight-lifting. The athletes are starting to learn how to train properly.	Keep the sessions short, they get tired and can not concentrate for long periods of time.
J16	Initially six. Ultimately eight.	Four/five water. Two strength training. One/two cross training. Still learning how to train properly.	This is a big year academically as the athlete meets public exams for the first time.
J17/J18	Initially seven to eight. Ultimately, if involved in a GB team, they must be capable of training 10 to 14 sessions.	Seven/eight water. Two/three strength training. Two/three cross training. One day a week should be off . Should be developing good base endurance and strength. Some sessions can be short such as a 30-minute ergo at rate 24.	10 to 14 sessions per week must be taken in the context of a GB team in a training camp environment where they have no other distractions other than rowing.
A J17/J18 who makes the Junior World Championship Team or Coupe de la Jeunesse Team has to be capable of training two to three times per day for a week at a time. They have to be capable of doing a 20-km UT2 outing but they will have the opportunity to get the correct rest, recovery and food intake.			

Do not forget rest and recovery

'How much and how often?' is a question that is regularly asked. The table above is a guide and needs to be adapted depending on:

- coaching availability
- equipment and resources available
- safety on both the water and the land
- weather conditions
- time available
- the club's requirements
- the demands and needs of individual athletes

For example:

A J16/J17 athlete who has been in the sport for three or four years, who will hopefully have started to develop some sort of

endurance base, will be able to cope with a different training load to a novice J16/J17, whatever their ability or potential, who has only been in the sport a couple of months and has no previous sporting background.

Before considering 'how much and how often' we must consider the other demands and pressures on a junior athlete. Life must be a healthy balance and we as coaches have a responsibility to consider the following when we put demands on our athletes to train. We want our youngsters to stay in the sport for a long time and become our future club captains, secretaries and umpires as well as our future Olympic champions. Remember that they or their parents might want them to do more, we as coaches sometimes have to say **no**.

The following list is clearly not complete but is intended to promote thought. Those who aspire to being successful in their rowing clearly enjoy the sport and want to row but need to balance their rowing with:

- family life
- academic qualifications and demands
- friends and a social life
- health (juniors can experience big growth spurts and training must be adapted)
- other activities

The training must be progressive over the years. Ultimately a J17/J18 athlete may want to represent their country at the Junior World Rowing Championships or the Coupe de la Jeunesse. This is quite clearly a very proud moment for any athlete, but this should not be their end goal, but a step on the ladder to being an Olympian or rowing in the U23 team and then the senior team.

Variety, fun, skill development and quality are essential when setting a programme. Fun is learning new skills and then applying them. If our young athletes learn to scull and row well then they will ultimately be able to go faster, hence further in the same time. We must ensure that at the early stage in the development of any athlete, they focus on getting the basics right, which should include:

- posture
- correct use of hands
- bladework

What other training are they doing?

Remember that nearly all our junior athletes are at school or college and will often have a PE lesson plus a games lesson each week. Others may also be members of another sports club. These sessions need to be taken in to account when deciding how much rowing training they are expected to complete.

Rest and recovery

It is not just about the number of sessions a top J18 athlete can achieve but also about the amount of rest and recovery they are getting between sessions. Are your athletes getting the necessary rest and recovery time? Are they eating properly and refuelling themselves correctly to enable good recovery from a hard training session and to prepare themselves for the next session? The athlete should try to have one complete rest day a week.

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