

BEGINNER TRAINING PLAN



If you are new to indoor rowing or regular exercise, this eight week plan is for you. It can be used as a standalone training plan, but also works well as part of a longer gym workout, or alongside other fitness activities. At the end of the programme you will be able to confidently row for 2000m.

BEFORE YOU START...

Rowing technique	It is easy to learn the basics of rowing technique and improve over time. Check out the technique guidance on our website to get started.		
Stay motivated	Sometimes it helps to have a goal to work towards. So why not enter an indoor rowing event, or set up your own with friends or other gym goers. Alternatively, plan a charity challenge.		
Get set up	Make sure the monitor is at eye level and the foot strap is across the ball of your foot. If using a Concept 2 rowing machine, set the damper level to four or below to help maintain good technique.		
Warm up and cool down	Before every session do 5 minutes of exercise to get your body warmed up. Afterwards, do a 5 minute cool down and then stretch.		
What is 'stroke rate'?	The number of strokes per minute – with a typical range being 18 to 30. We recommend you stick to a lower stroke rate of 18-24 whilst still perfecting your technique and focus on consistency rather than speed.		
What is 'split'?	The time it takes to row 500m. Focus on keeping the split, or pace, consistent, which will become easier as your technique and fitness improves.		
Things to remember when rowing...	Focus on the stroke sequence: legs, body, arms in the drive phase (when you push back and straighten your legs) and arms, body, legs in the recovery phase (when you bend your knees and slide forward). Count to two on the drive and three on the recovery to control your technique and differentiate a hard drive from a slower recovery.		
How hard should I row?	The training programme will ask you to row at a low, medium or high intensity:		
	Low Intensity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should feel comfortable• Can hold a conversation• Guide rate 18-22• Sustainable for a longer row	Medium Intensity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working harder, heart rate up• Can speak in shorter sentences• Guide rate 22-26• Not sustainable for long periods	High Intensity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working harder still• Breathing hard• Guide rate 26+• Use for short efforts / bursts

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Week 1

Aim: Get used to being on the rowing machine, develop technique (consistent stroke rate, sequence and posture) and build basic fitness.

Session 1: 1 min row at low intensity, 1 min rest, repeat 5 times.

Session 2: 5 min row at low intensity, 3 min rest, repeat 2 times.

Fitness boost: Combine with a 10 min jog / walk – 1 min on, 1 min off.

Week 2

Aim: Increase the time you exercise and focus on using good technique. Think about rowing smoothly with a focus on the powerful drive, then slow recovery.

Session 1: 2 min row at low intensity, 1 min rest, repeat 5 times.

Session 2: 5 min row at low intensity, 3 min rest (or light row), repeat 3 times.

Fitness boost: Combine with 15 min jog / walk – 1 min on, 1 min off.

Week 3

Aim: Further increase exercise time. Work at a higher intensity. Look for consistency in stroke rate and split when rowing for longer durations.

Session 1: 500m at medium intensity, 2 min rest, repeat 4 times. Note time for each 500m.

Session 2: 10 min row with first 5 min at low intensity, next 5 min at medium.

Fitness boost: Combine with 20 min jog / walk – 1 min on, 1 min off.

Week 4

Aim: Increase the amount of medium intensity work and change the focus to distance not time i.e. the harder you work, the quicker you finish. Focus on technique control.

Session 1: 1000m row at medium intensity, 5 min rest, repeat 2 times.

Session 2: 15 min row – 3 min low intensity, 3 min medium, 3 min low, 3 min medium, 3 min low.

Fitness boost: Combine with 20 min jog / walk – 2 min on, 1 min off.

Week 5

Aim: Feel comfortable with the current level of exercise and complete your first 2000m at medium intensity.

Session 1: 30 strokes at low intensity followed by a 10 stroke burst at medium intensity, repeat 5 times.

Session 2: 2000m row. Note the time.

To work out an approx. 500m pace to aim for, add together the times for the 4 x 500m session you did (week 3) add 20 seconds and divide by 4.

*For example:
2.30+2.40+2.40+2.38+20 =
10mins48 secs = 2.42 per 500m.*

Fitness boost: Combine with 20 min jog / walk – 3 min on, 1 min off.

Week 6

Aim: Introduce some short pieces at high intensity to help build fitness and ability to recover quickly.

Session 1: 1 min row at high intensity, 1 min rest, repeat 6 times.

Session 2: 500m at medium intensity, 2 min rest, repeat 4 times. Note the times and look for an improvement over week 3 times.

Fitness boost: Combine with 25 min jog / walk – 3 min on, 1 min off.

Week 7

Aim: Introduce varied workouts and focus on controlling technique when pushing yourself. Can you maintain good rowing technique when tired?

Session 1: 1000m row at medium intensity (every other minute include a 10 stroke high intensity burst), 5 min rest, repeat 2 times.

Session 2: 10 min row (2 min low intensity, 2 min medium, 1 min high, 2 min medium, 3 min low), 5 min rest, repeat 2 times.

Fitness boost: Combine with 25 min jog / walk – 4 min on, 1 min off.

Week 8

Aim: Focus on a powerful drive and slower recovery. How does your 500m compare to week 3 and 6?

Session 1: 5 min row at medium intensity, 3 min rest (or light row), repeat 4 times.

Session 2: 500m row at medium intensity, 1000m at medium, 500m at high, 2 min rest in between.

Fitness boost: Combine with 25 min jog / walk – 4 min on, 1 min off.

Congratulations on successfully completing the 8 week training plan.

Now it is time to do a 2000m row and celebrate your improvement in:

- Technique
- Consistency in rate and split
- Overall time.

You should now feel ready to take on your next rowing challenge!