

# Rowing Instructions

## Set Up

### Hooking up the handles

You should always get in and out of the boat with the handles unhooked so you won't trip over the ropes. Hook them up with the **rope end down**.

### Seat Positioning

For all the basic strokes, the seat back should be in the most upright position. Scoot your butt all the way back in the seat and keep it there. It is important that you are centered in the seat and not off to one side (causing the boat to tilt). Check by looking down at the seat clamping knob at the front of the seat and make sure you are centered over it.

### Seat track settings guide

For different height people the seat can be moved fore and aft (like a car seat). There are position numbers on the slide track for reference. Clamping knobs are located at the front and back of the seat. (Use these settings as a starting point).

Height: 5'-2" 5'-4" 5'-6" 5'-8" 5'-10" 6'-0" 6'-2"  
Position: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Propulsive Strokes vs. Maneuvering Strokes

Propulsive strokes (strokes which move the boat forward) are done using either the *foot pedals* or the *swiveling power handles*.

Maneuvering strokes (stopping, backing up and turning sharply) are done with the hands on the *maneuvering handles* located directly on the oar shafts.

It's important to know how to maneuver, especially how to stop, before you perfect your propulsive skills, so that's the first thing you should learn.

## Maneuvering Strokes

### Stopping

Using the maneuvering handles, turn the oars so the blades are vertical. This is called *squaring the oars*. Square the oars and hold them down in the water. This is called *holding water*. To stop rapidly, hold water with both oars.

### Backing up

Using the maneuvering handles, square both oars and push them down into the water. Then push the oars forward. This is called *back paddling* and will move the boat backward.

### Making sharp turns

For a sharp turn, hold water with the inside oar (inside of the turn) while rowing with a forward propulsive stroke with the outside oar. For an even sharper turn, you can back paddle with the inside oar while rowing forward with the outside oar.

### Making gradual turns

For gradual turns while under way (using propulsive strokes) you just take longer strokes on one side and/or use a little more pressure on one side.

## Propulsive Strokes

### Overview

You can row with your feet (*lower body stroke*) or with your hands (*upper body stroke*) or both together (*full body stroke*). Most people can row comfortably at touring speed using upper or lower body strokes. These two strokes are easy to learn and you should be able to do them well on your first time out. For traveling at higher speeds or to get a higher intensity workout, you can use the full body stroke. The full body stroke may take a little longer to get completely comfortable with. It usually takes some experimenting to get the seat settings just right and some time to learn the muscle movements.

## Rowing Instructions (continued)

### **Lower body stroke (feet only)**

Put your feet on the pedals and your hands in your lap. Move **both feet together** for this stroke. Start out by bending your knees, pulling your feet back toward you as far as you can. Do this slowly and smoothly, allowing time for the oars to swing forward. Don't jerk your feet back so fast that the ropes go slack. When the oars have swung all the way forward, push on the pedals, both feet together. The oars will automatically lower and "catch" the water. Continue pushing the pedals smoothly all the way forward. Push hard enough to keep the oars down in the water. Stop pushing with a little bend in your knees and let them down gently. Don't drop your knees down harshly into the fully extended position. Pause for a moment (1/2 second or so) at the end of the stroke to let the oars lift and clear the water before repeating the stroke. The oars will lift automatically at the end of the stroke.

*(Pull pedals back... push pedals forward... pause... repeat)*

The most common mistake for beginners is to pull your feet back too fast and start pushing forward before the oars have had a chance to swing all the way forward.

### **Upper body stroke (hands only)**

Take your feet off the pedals and place them on the floor to the outside of the pedals. Hold the swiveling handles lightly in your hands (neither lifting them up nor pushing them down). Start out by pushing the handles forward while leaning your body forward away from the backrest. You don't need to lift the oars; they should just clear the water or skim over the top of it. When you have reached your maximum forward position, lower your hands and pull straight back on the handles. Pull all the way back and lean back in the seat. Pause for a moment (1/2 second or so) at the end of the pull to let the oars lift and clear the water

before repeating the stroke.

*(Push handles forward... pull handles back... pause... repeat)*

The most common mistake for beginners is to unconsciously lift the oars high up out of the water on the forward swing of the oars. This is called "skying the oars" and is considered bad form.

### **Full body stroke (hands and feet combined)**

The easiest way to learn this stroke is to start out rowing with just your feet and then follow the motion of the handles with your hands without actually touching them. After doing this for a while, lightly grasp the handles with just your finger tips. As the oars swing forward, lean forward and push the handles ahead a little. This will push your feet farther back toward your body, increasing your stroke length. (If you are not flexible enough to do it this way you can row without leaning forward using a slightly shorter stroke). Pull straight back on the handles as you push the pedals forward with your feet. Lean back as you pull. Pause for a moment (1/2 second or so) at the end of the stroke to let the oars lift and clear the water.

*(Pull pedals back while pushing handles forward... push pedals forward while pulling handles back... pause... repeat)*

The most common mistake for beginners is not leaning forward and pushing the oars ahead during the forward swing of the oars.