

GOOD DRILLS TO KNOW AND PRACTICE

The ready position

In the ready position the rower is erect, upright, but not rigid, reaching from the hips with relaxed fingers, the shoulders and back extended - just like it says: reaching and ready. The ready position is the same at any place on the slide - full, half, or none.

Note: this is not an exercise in pain tolerance. Letting the knees up a few inches at no slide will allow a more comfortable and longer reach.

Emergency Stop

From blades feathered and on the water, roll your wrists upward, backing the blades into the water. You control your deceleration by how fast and far you lift your wrists, and by how hard you pull up against the water. The advantage of this method is that even in nervous-making situations, the blades will not suddenly grab or dive and the upward pressure on them will keep the boat very stable. If this is new to you, try it, and get good at it.

Push/pull drill

Simply hold the blades square in the water and pull and push the handles back and forth (one hand at a time, at least at first), noticing how hard it is to keep the blades square as handles are pushed away with even medium force.

Find your marks

Sit at the finish, blades buried. Note where your hands meet your body.

Dave Drill

Drawing the handles into the finish with increasing pressure - draw to the Find-your-marks place. Notice that you have to pull up.

Dave Drill plus Brakes

Start a Dave Drill followed by an Emergency Stop, then combine the two - no feather in between. Then, gradually, begin to relax the wrists, lessening the amount of stop, until you're not stopping at all. Notice that neither are you feathering - as you stop "stopping", the blades roll onto the water all by themselves.

The goal is to learn to effect the finish by pulling hard all the way in, then doing nothing more than to stop pulling and relax the wrists.

Legs down rowing - lots of it

Best catch practice there is - you have to be quick. And of course every catch you practice is necessarily followed by a finish to practice.

Tiny strokes

Sitting legs down, relaxed but upright, start the stroke with the hands just a foot away from your body. End the stroke in exactly the same position, ready for another. You'll only get a small peck at the water, so if you are going to move the boat at all, you will need to work the blades through the entirety of your very limited stroke, and you will find that there is no time for anything but the simplest gesture. Indeed, here "less is more".

Silent rowing

Start with easy Dave drills, trying to row silently. How hard can you pull without making any noise? Hint: push out on the handles with your thumbs.

Racing starts

Practice racing starts off the paddle. Begin with an easy paddle, lining up with at least a couple of other boats. On my call take a ten stroke start as fast as you can, then resume your paddle. Try different rates, length of stroke, etc. You can draw some rough conclusions by comparing your speed to your neighbor's.

Catch drill

From about half slide, make a quick, hard catch; then immediately relax. Drive your legs to set the blades. Try to be so quick that the boat hardly moves.

Catch drill plus legs

This is the catch drill where you drive the legs all the way down. Don't catch and then drive - make it one motion. This drill should move the boat - the more the better.

Paddle with a bump

The "bump" is a catch drill with an easy rest of the stroke.

Rowing feet out

Channel Paul Enquist!