

NextStroke Rower Guide

This guide, created by current and former Division I rowers, covers
the small choices that truly impact splits



Introduction

This guide was built off years of experience, mistakes, and learning what actually works. Rowing is not just about taking strokes. It is about preparation, discipline, and having structure behind the scenes. Whether you are a prospective college athlete or want to be a better rower, this guide offers overlooked tips that will make a real difference in your workouts right now. Applying these tips will improve how you feel during workouts and how you perform when it matters. Combine this guide with our scientifically proven training programs for even more results. Learn more on our [instagram](#). No guesswork, just progress.

Pre Workout Nutrition

This information below is fuel for workouts. You should expect to eat large, healthy, balanced meals to recover from workouts. (Carbs, Protein, Veg)

- While consistently training, aim for 60 grams of carbs every hour. (Apples are your best friend)
- If you train in the morning: Wake up earlier to eat breakfast, even if it's just a fruit bar or banana.
- Measure your workout snacks in carbohydrates before and during workouts.
- Shake a soda to remove carbonation, creating a smooth sugary drink. This gives 70–80 g of carbs plus caffeine. Drink an hour before workout.
- Keep your food simple before workouts: sugary drinks, candy, fruit bars, etc., are okay, they give quick energy you'll burn off.
- Do NOT eat foods high in fats right before workout: Eggs, Nuts, dairy, etc.
- Avoid consuming a lot of liquid before workouts. Hydrate consistently so you don't have to cram it in.
- For long workouts (an hour or more), bring extra food and plan what you'll eat ahead of time.
- The day before a workout, eat plenty of calories with carbs, protein, and fat.
- Caffeine can help you push harder. A cup of black coffee is ideal.--- Highly caffeinated, carbonated drinks aren't recommended.

Warm up and activation

- Avoid static stretching before rowing. It relaxes your muscles. Use dynamic stretches instead to warm up (below) and get your muscles ready for activity.
- Once you're on the erg, start by isolating each part of the stroke: arms, body, legs. 2 minutes each. Do this every time you get on an erg.
- If you are doing steady: do 5-10 minutes of easy, full stroke rowing. Feel each muscle activate.
- If you are piecing: 10-15 minutes @ steady state pace. Then, to prepare your body, do short intervals at the split you want to hit. (Ex: 4 x 30 seconds @ target split)
- Take small sips/bites of food before and after warmup. Avoid food that may dry your mouth out.
- Swimmers and other athletes often slap specific muscles to increase blood flow and activation. You can do the same, target areas like the hamstrings, calves, lats, or quads to prime the muscles. If you aren't warm or sweating at the end of the warmup, it isn't sufficient and you may risk injury.
- Avoid long breaks between warmup and main work. Don't cool down after a warmup.

General Erg Tips

- Unless there is an emergency, you shouldn't quit a workout halfway. Doing so can create a habit of avoiding discomfort instead of pushing through it.
 - Lighter athletes should use a damper setting of 3-4. (Rate) Heavier, stronger athletes should put their setting at 4-5. (Power)
 - Apps like RowHero or Erg Data show stats like stroke length. The higher your stroke length, the easier splits will come.
 - Keep your chain level. A chain that moves up and down wastes power and slows your splits.
 - Legs first. If your arms bend early, you lose power before it reaches the flywheel.
 - Relax your grip on the handle.
 - Slide control matters. Rushing the recovery kills rhythm and makes pieces feel harder.
 - Heels down as long as possible. This helps you keep force through the legs.
 - Finish high into your chest, it often gives a higher stroke length.
 - Poor posture makes rowing harder and wears you out even faster. Sit up tall, keep your chest pointed towards the erg monitor.
 - Have a plan before a piece. A range of splits can make a big difference. (ex: 1:55-1:58)
 - Use the Power Curve option on the PM5 screen to see how you apply force through the stroke. Ideally, you peak in force around halfway through the drive and hold it for as long as possible.
 - Feet out Erging while doing steady state can build core stability and overall coordination. Keep your feet planted when you do this.
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Post workout recovery

- After the workout, Slow down and take easy strokes for 5 to 10 minutes. This helps flush out lactic acid in your legs.
 - Use Static stretches for ~15 minutes after you cool down on the erg. Focus on hamstrings, glutes, quads, lats, or any sore muscles.
 - Eat carbohydrates within 30 minutes after a workout. Your body enters a window where it'll absorb the most nutrients it can. Don't miss this window. Gatorade, Powerade, or other dextrose based carbohydrates rapidly replenish muscles and initiate the recovery process. The sooner you refuel the better you will feel. A spoonful of honey works well too.
 - Use tools like foam rollers, tennis balls, or theraguns. Roll out tight muscles after workouts or as a bedtime routine to help them recover.
 - Lean your legs against a wall with your torso on the ground to drain lactic acid from your legs. You can also sleep with a pillow below your legs to replicate this all night.
 - Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep every night. 10:00 to 11:00 pm bedtime works well for most athletes. Fall asleep at a consistent time everyday.
 - A short walk after a workout or on a rest day can accelerate healing and prepare you for the next day.
 - Foods which promote anti-inflammatory effects are great for recovering quickly after a workout. Blueberries, Salmon, Spinach, and Olive Oil are some examples.
 - Focus on slow, diaphragmatic breathing with long exhales after a workout.
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Extras

- Mixing up your sessions with cross training can make the grind feel easier. Try biking, running or swimming to occasionally replace erg workouts.
 - Wear a heart rate monitor, or a watch that tracks your heart rate during a workout.
 - A clean seat track reduces friction and improves consistency between sessions.
 - Use the same footplate height every session.
 - Train at the same time of day when possible
 - Wear thin, breathable clothing. Make sure you are comfortable and aren't restricted in your movement.
 - Set phone alarms to sip water every 30–45 min
 - Take pictures or keep track of every workout you do for reference later.
 - Listen to music you love.
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**These tips are just a small sample of the guidance and support
NextStroke can provide to help you reach your full potential.**

By consistently applying these tips and combining them with our structured training programs, you will maximize efficiency, build strength, and see measurable progress. Remember, results come from intentional practice and smart choices.

Connect with us for even more advanced rowing tips and to combine them with elite training plans tailored specifically to you & your goals.



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