

SRC SQUAD TRAINING

Theme Sheet - Drive ergos

The aim is to impart maximum work to the ergo handle but in tune with the speed of the wheel. The faster the work the faster the drive. Slow rates demand a more progressive drive. The drive involves the legs, body and arms in that order. In all cases it is important to place the blade (catch) and drive the legs.

The drive should be taken with the legs first but it is important to engage the glutes as part of this process. It's almost a case of thinking about driving with the backside rather than the quads. This has the further benefit of ensuring that the core is engaged and the lower back is set and solid. The upper body and shoulders remain over the knees creating the "hang" where the pressure is on the legs. The arms are not involved during the first half of the drive. It's almost a case of "leaving the hands behind."

During the middle of the drive the body angle opens as the legs exert their maximum force and the arms come into play. Legs, body and arms finish in this order but it should feel as if they finish together. The speed of the handle accelerates through the stroke.

Remember

- Catch and drive;
- Drive with your backside and a solid lower back;
- Do not open the angle between body and horizontal until mid drive;
- Keep the arms straight until the last quarter of the drive - leave the hands behind;
- Accelerate the boat towards the finish.

Avoid

- Taking the catch with the shoulders - just raise the hands;
- Raising the hands during the stroke - keep them level from the catch to the chest;
- Bum shoving - keep the lower back solid;
- Hunching the shoulders during the arms draw - keep them low and relaxed but roll them into the finish rather than using arms only
- Leaning out of the boat, especially at the finish. For sweep rowing try to follow the arc of the blade during the stroke. This provides more clearance for the outside hand at the finish.

Ergo Exercises

- Fixed hand rowing

Use a boat tie to fix the ergo handle at the catch position (a double turn is enough with the coach holding the tie and controlling the position of the seat). The rower should be encouraged to drive the legs with a solid lower back so that they stand, jockey-like, hanging on the handle. As the rower releases the drive to sit down the coach should control the seat so that it is placed under the rower's backside. This exercise gives the feel of a solid leg drive

- Off seat rowing

The coach should take one turn off the boat tie, holding onto the tie with one hand and taking control of the seat with the other. The rower should then drive the legs with the coach controlling release of the tie and seat such the rower reaches the end of the stroke landing gently on the seat. This should be repeated several times to get the feel of lifting the backside off the seat. The tie should then be removed and the rower asked to row slowly (rate 20) lifting the backside off the seat on each stroke but without falling off the back of the seat. Thinking "engaging the glutes" will help this process and keep the lower back solid. This can be extended to a UT2 row where the focus point is to lift the backside every stroke, engaging the glutes.

- Up-hill rowing

If crew members are failing to engage the glutes at the start of the drive the coach should raise the back of the ergo by approx 1 ft. The person should then row, without the handle initially getting the feel of engaging the glutes at the beginning of the drive. This should be followed by rowing with the handle with the slide still raised followed by rowing on a flat slide, trying to get the same "feel" as up-hill rowing.

- Picking up the first six inches of the stroke by raising the hands and beginning to drive the legs. The angle of forward lean of the body should not vary during this exercise. Check to ensure:

- Shins vertical, no gap between thighs and body;
- Lower back set at catch;
- Body in pre-stretched position - check full length;

We often combine a minute of this exercise with one minute of "straight arms no body lean", "straight arms with body lean" and "normal stroke with exaggerated hands away

and reach forward within a twenty minute steady state ergo piece. The "straight arms no body lean" is a natural extension of the "first six inches" exercise.