

SRC SQUAD TRAINING

Theme Sheet - finishes on the ergo

Height of the seat above the heels

The height of the seat above the stretcher is a compromise between efficiency of leg drive, i.e. (reduced distance or heels high efficient leg drive) and stability, i.e. lower heels, lower centre of gravity. It is recommended that the seat should be 16-20cm above the heels.

There are a number of extraneous factors which will encourage crew members to wrongly position their feet. On the Concept 2 ergos the foot straps may be too high for ladies with small feet:

The key objective is to ensure that the crew member can get into the correct position at the catch:

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

At the same time there should be no last second rush forward on the last 10-15cm of the slide and no reaching for the "extra bit" once as front stops.

For inflexible people this may involve lowering the feet until flexibility improves. Any theoretical loss of efficiency in leg drive will be more than compensated by a catch and drive taken from a strong stable position. The proof is easy to show, try rowing on an ergo with sliders. Move the heel restraints up and allow yourself to accelerate up the slide - see the score drop off. Now lower your feet and control the slide so you slide steadily and take the catch by raising the hands and pushing the legs first, the scores will speak for themselves.

Rowing practice on the ergo

Recovery first

The key to Core Rowing is for the body to be stable in the correct position at the catch. Whilst it may seem odd to start from the finish of the stroke the finish and recovery set you up for the next stroke. The blade(s) are extracted square from the water. This is achieved through downward pressure on the outside hand (rowing) both hands (sculling) keeping the wrists as flat as possible. For sweep oars (rowing) the inside hand/wrist does the turning and the blade turns within the outside hand.

The action on the ergo is simpler, in that, the hands should drop by approximately two inches (5cm) at the end of the stroke. It is also normal to breathe out during the latter part of the stroke and during the finish. As the hands come down and away tilt the pelvis to bring the body upright and start to rotate the body forward into the "hands, body" position. This is where core rowing starts by engaging core muscles. once the hands are dropped keep them level as you reach forward - it is often good to think "reach forward" rather than rock-over, which encourages you to drop your hands further as the pelvis tilts.

As you reach forward keep the back neutral in a strong comfortable posture. Engage your core muscles in the same way as you do in core strength exercises, you have already breathed out. You are now in a strong stable position and ready to slide.

Ergo Exercises

Try this with no handles. Practice the finish checking on the following:

- breathe out at the finish
- keep the feet on the foot plate, so you don't rock back too far
- check that the finish is drawn in level before dropping the hands to "extract the blade"
- practice engaging the core as you push your hands away and reach forward
- once the hands are dropped keep them level as you reach forward
- emphasise strong not stiff, do not over-emphasise the rock over, you can safely continue to reach slightly further forward as your legs "break" and you start to slide. The "perfect stroke" coaching point is "All body swing by half slide."