

Learn To Row FAQ

Q: Is this class for beginners?

A: Yes. Learn to Row is for those who have never touched an oar in their lives but can't wait to start!

Q: Am I: fit enough / tall enough / too old / too heavy / too... to take this class?

A: Whatever your reason for wanting to row, be it to get in shape, compete in the Olympics, or just be on the water, this class is where you start. If you have a desire to learn, we have the desire to teach you. There's a lot to cover, and everyone will face different challenges, but the focus is on having fun and learning the basics to take you to where you want to go. Our boats can accommodate individuals up to 285 lbs. Rowing does require a lot of mobility- if you have a physical limitation like not being able to bend one knee or elbow please contact us to arrange a time to stop by the boathouse and try the rowing stroke on an ergometer to see how it feels.

Q: What kind of workout will I get?

A: Rowing is a full body workout. The amount of effort you expend is directly proportional to the workout you will get. The first few classes focus on learning proper technique - then it's up to you how much of a workout you get.

Q: I already kayak / canoe / whitewater raft, etc. Can I skip this class and go right into one of the rowing programs?

A: While your on-water experiences will undoubtedly help with your balance and boat sense, rowing is completely unlike any other paddle sport. The technique and equipment is unique. Learn to Row is a prerequisite for anyone who has never participated in this sport.

Q: What do I need to wear/bring to class?

A: You shouldn't have to purchase anything special to participate in Learn to Row. The first class is land-based, we watch the safety video and then learn the basics on a rowing ergometer. After that, once you move onto the water, dress weather-appropriately as if you were going for a jog or brisk walk. Layers are best. You want to wear clothes loose enough to move in, but not so baggy that fabric will get caught in the moving parts of the boat, specifically the sliding seat. In cold weather, remember that cotton will not keep you warm if it gets wet. Man-made layers of cool-max, polypropylene or fleece work best. Also, old athletic shoes and wool socks are recommended to keep your feet warm, as they almost always get splashed. In warm weather, hats and sunscreen are advised.

Q: My hands get really cold. May I wear gloves?

A: Gloves are not recommended for rowing, as one of the things we focus on is developing good blade work; the technique of positioning the blade to enter the water at the correct angle. Having direct contact with the oar handle is essential to 'feel' when the blade is in the correct place. An alternative to gloves, however, are things called 'pogies'. Pogies slip over your hands and then slide over the end of the

oar, protecting your hands while maintaining contact with the handle. Lake Union Crew carries them in our pro shop, or your coach can tell you how to make some from a pair of old socks.

Q: How much time is spent on the water?

A: Of the 12 classes, 11 of them are devoted to water training. The first class is land based, and that is where we will learn all the fundamentals of the rowing stroke starting with body positioning, sequence of movements, etc. The only reason we don't go on the water is if it's too windy (over 10 knots or so).

Q: What if I have to miss a class?

It is most important to attend the first 3 classes to get all the basics. You may attend whichever class you miss in a simultaneously happening class- I.E. if you miss Wednesday morning's class (the 2nd meeting) you may make it up in Thursday evenings class (also the 2nd meeting). If you miss 1 or 2 after that, it's not too much of an issue. Talk to your coach if you have any conflicts.

Q: What are my chances of ending up in the water?

A: It is our goal to always be 'on' the water and not 'in' the water. That said, rowing is a water sport and there has been the occasional instance of a rower ending up in the water. In the largest boats, or 'eights', it's nearly impossible to fall in. Smaller boats are 'tippier' and the chance is greater that rowers go in... yet this is a rare occurrence. Our coaches are equipped to handle these situations quickly and safely, and each class watches a safety video before going on the water.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.