# Learn to Row - Pre-Course Information

### Aims of the Course

The aim of the course is to teach the basics of sculling, rowing, indoor rowing and coxing, so that learners are equipped to take up rowing recreationally or competitively.

By the end of the course, each learner:

* Will know how to conduct themselves safely on the water and around the boathouse
* Will have experienced indoor rowing, sweep rowing on both sides, sculling and coxing
* Will have experienced both crew boats and the single scull
* Will have a basic grasp of rowing and sculling technique
* Will know the rules of the river
* Will be able to manoeuvre a boat safely on the water
* Will be able to move boats and blades safely from the boathouse to the water and *vice versa*
* Will know some basic rowing terminology
* Will be able to respond to and give some basic coxing commands
* Will know the options for joining the club

### The Sessions

The sessions run from XX every XX from XX for 10 weeks.

The course leader is Debbie Connolly. Debbie is supported by a team of volunteers called **Explore Assistants**. Explore Assistants are all members of the club, and all have some experience of rowing – some of them many years, some of them started only recently. Explore Assistants will help you out with getting boats in and out of the boathouse, getting you in and out of the boats, coxing, showing you what to do, and generally making sure you feel welcome and get lots out of the course.

**The sessions will run every week whatever the weather**.  We have indoor rowing facilities, so if river or weather conditions stop us getting on the water, we can still do a useful session.  There is also lots to learn about the equipment, terminology and safety, a lot of which must be done off the water anyway, and will benefit you once you get back on it.

**Please** **be punctual**. There will be a register and briefing session to begin with, and crews for rowing will be decided early on. If you need to get changed, please allow yourself time to do this before the course start time. If you are late, you may not get put in the crew that suits you best, and you may delay everyone in spending time on the water. Being punctual is part of rowing, so if you struggle with it, now’s the time to get into good habit!

**When you arrive** please wait outside the club on the tables and chairs set out. If it’s wet, the bar will be opened so that you can wait there (it may not be serving though!)

### If you need to miss a session

Please tell your course leader if you can’t make it as soon as you know; if you know in advance please email [explorerowing@durham-arc.org.uk](mailto:explorerowing@durham-arc.org.uk) , or on the day phone 0191 386 6431.

Although the course comprises the 10 sessions, and obviously it’s in your best interests to do them all, you will still be able to complete the course if you attend at least 7 sessions. You may be able to do catch up sessions by attending a session on another course, if there is space.

### Facilities

As well as a shed full of boats, the club has free car parking, a gym equipped with rowing machines, toilets, changing facilities and a bar (for afterwards!) Access to the building is via a key-fob system. As non-members you will need a member with a fob to let you in. All Explore Assistants should be able to do this.

### Safety

The safety of learners and Explore Assistants is paramount at all times.

If you have any health problems, which might put yourself or others at risk (you should have indicated this on your registration form), you **must** remind any Explore Assistant who assists you with any session at the start of the session.

If you can’t swim (also indicated on the registration form) or don’t feel confident on water, you **must** tell the Explore Assistant taking your session, and you **must** wear a life jacket. Anyone coxing **must** wear a life jacket. Although it’s not a requirement of the course, we would encourage anyone who is going to be involved in rowing on an ongoing basis to learn to swim.

It is **very** unlikely that you will end up in the water, since the boats you will use are very stable, but it can happen. If you do, the golden rule is **stay with the boat**. They all float, whichever way up they are. Also, note that you can stand up in most of the river Wear, so it’s easy to walk the boat to the side and await assistance. To minimise the risk of hypothermia, you should get as much of your trunk out of the water as soon as possible, either by walking the boat to the bank, or by pulling yourself onto the boat. You will always have an Explore Assistant nearby who will help you.

If the weather’s hot, or if you do a session on the rowing machines, it’s a good idea to **bring a drink** with you to stop you from getting dehydrated. Sunglasses and caps can also be helpful in the evening sun.

You will be introduced to other safety matters (such as checking boats over, how to lift boats, and the rules of the river) as you progress on the course.

### What should I wear for rowing?

Clothing for rowing should allow freedom of movement without being too baggy, and should be appropriate for the weather. The sort of clothes you might wear to the gym are usually fine. If it might rain you’ll need a waterproof, and if it’s hot and sunny a t-shirt and shorts. It can be cool on the water, so it’s usually better to err on the side of more rather than less layers, and you can always take a layer off. Hats/caps are useful for if its cool, or starts raining whilst on the water. It’s a good idea to avoid clothing, which is baggy, or has lots of pockets or strings attached. You sit on a moving seat when you row, and this sort of clothing can get tangled in this, or caught in the oars. This is why Lycra tends to be what experienced rowers wear, but there is no need to buy anything made of that for the course.

On your feet a pair of trainers is fine. If you have a pair of flat plimsolls or something with flat soles, they are even better, as they tend to be easier to strap into the boat.

You might want to know that there’s a wide range of club kit, which can be purchased if you intend to carry on, and on the course you’ll be able to check out what members are wearing to see what you fancy.

Note that rowing is a water sport, and you can get wet even if you don’t fall in. So you should **always have a spare set of clothes with you** to change into.

### Problems? Comments?

If you have any problems at any stage on the course, please tell the course leader so that something can be done. If you have a problem with the course leader, please contact the club Captain, Richard Castling on [captain@durham-arc.org.uk](mailto:captain@durham-arc.org.uk).

We’re always looking to improve on the Learn to Row courses, so if you have any comments or suggestions about how we can do this, please let the course leader know at any time. There will also be a questionnaire about this at the end of the course for your feedback.

Finally, I really hope you enjoy the course and have a great introduction to rowing and all it has to offer, both physically and socially.

*Debbie Connolly*

*Explore Rowing Co-ordinator*

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*Mobile:*