



## MASTERS ROWING

Welcome to the wonderful world of masters rowing!

People take up (or resume) rowing at all ages. You don't have to be particularly athletic to get started – and it's quite all right if you haven't been exercising enough recently! RCA views rowing as the ideal sport for all adults, because it can be done at whatever level your body wants.

### What Does It Mean To Be A Masters Rower?

Masters rowers can range from 21 to over 80 years of age. The new masters rower often comes to rowing when there is some change in their life. This might be a change that provides time to take up an activity they have always wanted to try, or perhaps it's because of a renewed realization that physical activity is a necessity in their lives. Maybe it's because their sons or daughters have started rowing, or perhaps the individual rowed in high school or college and has always wanted to get back to it. The reasons are many.

### What Type of Masters Rowing Appeals to You?

The Learn to Row program is just the beginning! In masters rowing you will need to be self-motivated and decide for yourself how much training you want to do and where rowing fits in your life. With work and family, masters have many other priorities – and everyone's are different. Retired masters rowers have more flexibility. Some masters rowers are highly competitive, enjoy working out often and hard, and are very fit. Others row strictly for the experience of gliding through the water and enjoying the camaraderie of a good club. And there is a complete spectrum in between.

Like many sports, rowing offers the potential for a lifetime of learning and technical improvement. Whether for competition or purely for enjoyment, continuously working to improve the efficiency of one's stroke is a major part of our sport. For some, rowing becomes a passion involving external rowing camps, local, regional, national and even international competitions, and multiple hours of training every week. For others, it's a way to keep fit and meet people in a fun, waterside environment. It can be whatever you make it and whatever your commitments allow.

Masters training and racing programs should fit the needs and goals of all ages and levels of athletes. Masters rowing programs take into account your changing needs, as well as changes in your strength, flexibility and endurance throughout your lifespan. There are no particular prerequisites or physical requirements to be a masters rower other than you must be comfortable on the water and able to swim. You'll find information about minimum swimming guidelines in **Rower Safety**.



The RCA LTAD plan acknowledges the masters rower as either being Competitive for Life or Active for Life. Competitive for Life rowers enjoy racing and want to improve their technical skills along with their strength and endurance. Active for Life masters rowers row for fun, fitness and health (although continued skill development is essential and provides motivation to continue). Active for Life programs generally offer less structure and more flexibility in terms of time commitment.

Traditionally, competition is a part of rowing, and most clubs encourage some degree of competition. There are many regattas across Canada that either have masters events or are designed as masters-only. Masters compete within eleven age categories, from age 21 to over 80, so competition is within your own age group or, when there are multiple ages, age handicaps are applied. This helps to level the playing field, and also keeps it fun and fair! Masters competitions are 1000 m races, generally held in the summer, and head races of 4 to 6 km, which mostly take place in the fall. Many masters regattas also include mixed-crew events in which half of the crew are women and half are men. There are also open-water (coastal) competitions and touring opportunities.

### **Your Relationship with your Club**

If you are going to stay with rowing it is very important that you find a club, or some people within the club, who share your level of interest and with whom you are compatible. If the club is strictly competitive and doesn't have a more recreational side that suits you, find a club that does, or try to create a group within that club that focuses on recreational rowing. Conversely, if you want to train hard to win and you can't find people to train with, you can build or find that group as well. Rowing is a social sport and even if you chose to row in a single scull, rowing with others can keep you motivated during tough days and in less satisfactory weather conditions.

Masters rowers usually form the backbone of any rowing club. Masters are the volunteers that hold the club together, arranging the equipment, coaching and services needed. There are many opportunities to get involved – and get involved as early as you can! Make it *your* club, and help make it a friendly, fun club for new members. As a recent new member, you'll know better than anyone what can be done to make it better.

Rowing is a wonderful sport. It's a low-impact way of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle. It exercises almost every muscle group in the body. It challenges your balance, your flexibility, your endurance, your strength, your tenacity, and your ability to learn. It's very social; you will meet new friends and learn new ways to work in harmony with others. If you are not sure whether you can do it: Yes, you can! Whatever your age, physical ability or athletic background, rowing can be your sport for life.

### **FAQs**



*What is the difference between senior and masters rowing?*

These terms were originally named to segment the race differences. Many rowing clubs have senior and masters recreational and competitive categories.

**Age:** Senior rowers range in age from 19 to any age. Masters rowers start at age 21 and go up from there. Many masters typically begin in their late 20s or 30s. A senior can race in a masters event if they are 21 or older, and a masters-aged rower can race in a senior event. Younger senior rowers generally are still competitive and may try for U21 Canada Summer Games, U23 and Canada's national teams.

**Racing:** Masters events are 1000 m, and at some regattas are separated into age categories. Senior events are 2000 m.

