



The Basics of Strength Training for Rowing

Why, What, How, and When?

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Framing Concepts

1. Move better → Get stronger → Lift faster → Strain harder
 - a. Efficiency beats output
 - b. Technique needs to be precise and repeatable

2. Strength training is not the sport itself
 - a. Efficiency paradox: Lose-lose
 - b. Sport competition → Sport training → Sport drills → Erg → Strength training

Key Questions

What does the sport
overtrain?



Avoid or minimize impact

What does the sport
require?



Enhance to improve
performance

What does the sport
neglect or undertrain?



Address to fill this gap

Good strength training should...

Strength Training for Sport + Beyond

1. **Improve performance:** Enhance physical capacity to be just beyond the needs of the sport.
2. **Reduce risk of injury:** Training movements and muscles that the sport training neglects.

#1 and #2 are mutually reinforcing!

3. **Be more than the sport:** Physically active for life.

WHAT we do

Usually bodyweight, free-weight, resistance band, suspension trainer, rather than machine-based strength training

Move the body through space!

1. Squat
2. Hinge
3. Push
4. Pull
5. “Other” (Shoulder, Hip, Core, and Plyometrics)

Meet the Exercises: 2-Leg Squat



Bodyweight



Goblet



2DB/KB



Front Squat

Meet the Exercises: 1-Leg Squat



Lunge
w/support



Lunge



Lunge
w/load



RFESS



RFESS
w/load

Meet the Exercises: Hinge (part 1)



PVC Pipe



1DB/KB



2DB/KB



KB Swing

Meet the Exercises: Hinge (part 2)



Romanian Deadlift



Hex Bar Deadlift



Pushup



Dumbbell Bench

Meet the Exercises: Push (horizontal)



Elevated Pushup

Meet the Exercises: Push (vertical)



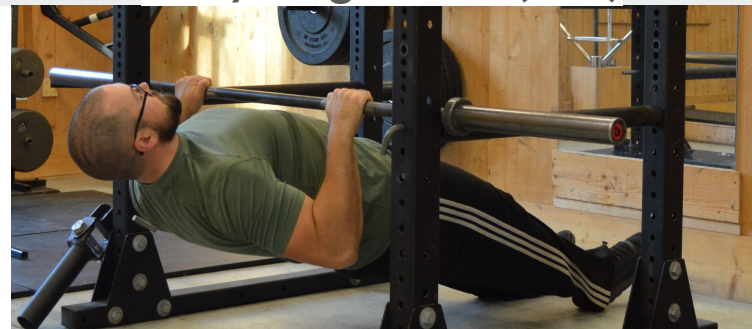
½-Kneeling Press



1-Arm Press

Meet the Exercises: Pull (horizontal)

Bodyweight Row (low)



X-Band Row



Bodyweight Row
(high)



1-Arm DB Row

Meet the Exercises: Pull (vertical)



Chin-Up



Band-Assisted Chin-Up

Meet the Exercises: Shoulder

Y-W-T Raise



Facepull



Pullapart

Meet the Exercises: Hip Abduct

Side-Lying Abduction



Glute Marching



Mini Band Walk

Meet the Exercises: Hip Adduct



Copenhagen Plank



Lateral Lunge

Meet the Exercises: Core



Seated Rockback



Side Plank



Ring/TRX Exercises

Meet the Exercises: Plyometric



**2-Leg
Vert/Broad**



**1-Leg
Vert/Broad**



**Backwards
Overhead**



**Forwards
Overhead**



Slam

HOW we do the exercises

1. Technique
2. Tempo
3. Range-of-motion
- ...
4. Load

Tempo

Default setting = 2:1

- Increase muscular tension
- Decrease loading
- More stimulus with less wear-and-tear

Closer to racing = 2:X

- Power up the lifting phase with the sport demands

Range-of-Motion

Default setting = Full (or as much with good technique)

- Increase muscular tension
- Decrease loading
- More stimulus with less wear-and-tear

Closer to racing = Still full

- Rowing is always long-ROM

Load

Just one way to add challenge to an exercise

Generally be 2-3 reps away from technical failure

- Technical: No more weight/reps possible with good technique
- Muscular: No more weight/reps possible with ANY technique

Good movement transfers to the sport

Adding load for the sake of load = lose/lose

WHEN we strength train

Ideally year-round (periodization = changing emphasis)

Ideally 2-3 times per week (45-60')

Ideally 6+ hours away from aerobic/sport training

- Plan A: AM/PM or different days
- Plan B: Strength before sport (with a few adjustments)
- Plan C: Sport before strength (with more adjustments)

Two-Phase Model (Junior/Master)

Off-Season

Reduced sport training

Increased strength/x-train

- + volume
- + frequency
- - intensity
- + variety (- specificity)

In-Season

Increased sport training

Maintenance with upside

- - volume
- - frequency
- + intensity
- + specificity (- variety)

Stop strength training in-season? Strongest at the start, weakest at the end.



Three-Phase Model (Club)

Off-Season

Reduced sport training

Increased strength/x

- + volume
- + frequency
- - intensity
- + variety (- specificity)

Pre-Season (Transition)

Increasing sport training

Decreasing strength/x

- - volume
- = frequency
- + intensity
- variety → specificity

In-Season

Increased sport training

Strength at maintenance (+)

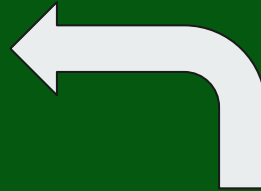
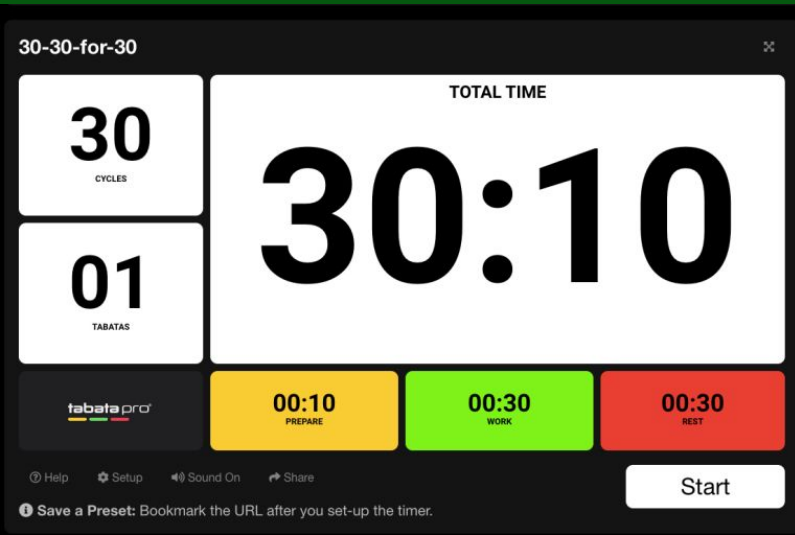
- - volume
- - frequency
- = intensity
- + specificity (- variety)

Start Starting!

30-30-for-30 system



Image: [OTPBooks and Dan John](#)



 [Auto-Timer: “Simple Touch Tabata Pro”](#)

30-30-for-30: 5x6, 6x5, 3x10, 2x15...?

5 rounds of 6 exercises

1. Pushup (hands elevated)
2. Bodyweight Row
3. Hinge (bodyweight --> 1DB or 1KB)
4. Core
5. Squat (bodyweight --> goblet)
6. Band Pullapart

REPEAT 5 TIMES (30 mins total)

5 rounds of 6 exercises (Upper + Hinge)

Full-Body Warmup (See "Warmup" page)

1. Pushup (hands elevated)
2. Bodyweight Row
3. Romanian DL (BB) or Nordic Hamstring Curl
4. Core
5. RFESS (left)
6. RFESS (right)

REPEAT 5 TIMES (30 mins total)

6 rounds of 5 exercises

1. Squat (bodyweight --> goblet)
2. Bodyweight Row
3. Standing Lunge/RFESS (left)
4. Standing Lunge/RFESS (right)
5. Pushup (hands elevated)

REPEAT 6 TIMES (30 mins total)

6 rounds of 5 exercises (Leg Focus)

Full-Body Warmup (See "Warmup" page)

1. Goblet Squat (paused/regular)
2. Bodyweight Row or Chin-Up Variation
3. RFESS (left)
4. RFESS (right)
5. Core

REPEAT 6 TIMES (30 mins total)

3 rounds of 10 exercises

1. Incline Bench Press (DB/BB)
2. Glute Marching
3. Hinge (bodyweight --> 1DB or 1KB)
4. Bodyweight Row
5. Standing/Reverse Lunge or RFESS (left)
6. Standing/Reverse Lunge or RFESS (right)
7. Y-Raise
8. Core
9. W-Raise
10. Core

REPEAT 3 TIMES (30 mins total)



[More about 30-30-for-30](#)
(these sample sessions and more)

Training Session Template (2x/wk)

Day 1
Full-Body Warmup
A1. Plyometric (Jump/Throw)
A2. Squat
B1. Horizontal Push (eg. pushup)
B2. Horizontal Pull (eg. row)
B3. Hinge (eg. Romanian deadlift)
C1. Hip Abduct/Adduct
C2. Shoulder
C3. Core

~10 mins to prepare

← **Power/coordination (3-6 x 2-4 reps)** →

← **Power/strength (3-5 x 3-8 reps)** →

← **Muscle/balance (3-4 x 8-15 reps)** →

← **Fill sport gaps (2-4 x 10-20 reps)** →

Day 2
Full-Body Warmup
A1. Plyometric (Jump/Throw)
A2. Hinge
B1. Overhead Press (eg. 1-arm DB)
B2. Vertical Pull (eg. chin-up)
B3. Single-Leg Squat (lunge/RFESS)
C1. Hip Abduct/Adduct
C2. Shoulder
C3. Core

More About Strength Training

2:30pm: “Advanced Rowing Strength Training”

Email: rowingstronger@proton.me

www.RowingStronger.com

Youtube: [@rowingstronger](https://www.youtube.com/@rowingstronger)

The “Rowing Stronger” book (\$30)

