

Rowing Starter Guide & Terms

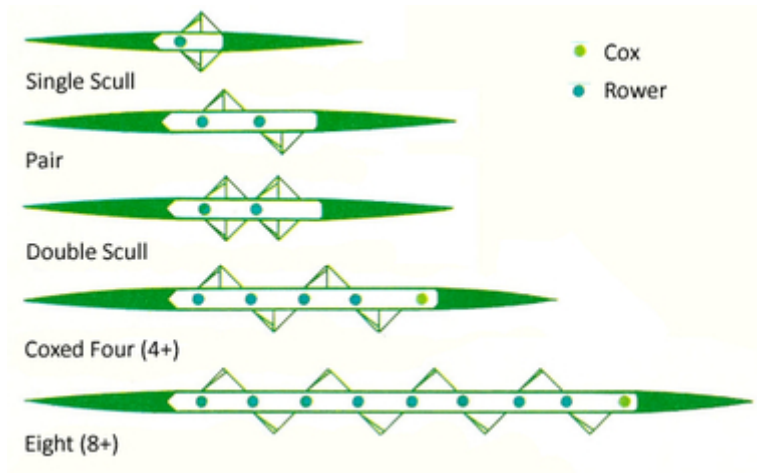
Know nothing about rowing and want to get clued up? You're in the right place. Here's a no-nonsense guide to (almost) everything you ever wanted to know about rowing, where you can get the lowdown on all the rowing lingo you're likely to hear down by the river over the course of time at the Lowestoft Rowing Club (and elsewhere). Hopefully this will all be useful and interesting:

Methods

Rowing Sculling

Rowing with one oar (blade).
Rowing with two oars (blades)

The Boats

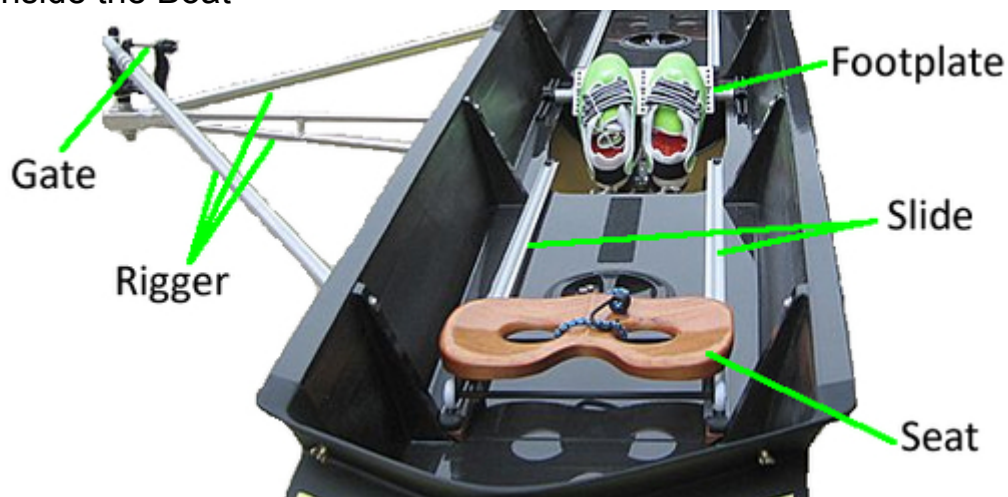


The Oars (Blades)



The blades we mostly use are called either “cleaver” or “Macon” blades, due to their shape (either a bit like a meat cleaver, or a wine bottle !). The blades can be either carbon-fibre or wooden, and sometimes have grips on the handles. The blades are side-specific, i.e. bow-side blades are different to stroke-side blades (the spoon of the blade curves the other way). The image above shows the club colours used on our blades.

Inside the Boat



The **gate** holds your blade in place while you row.

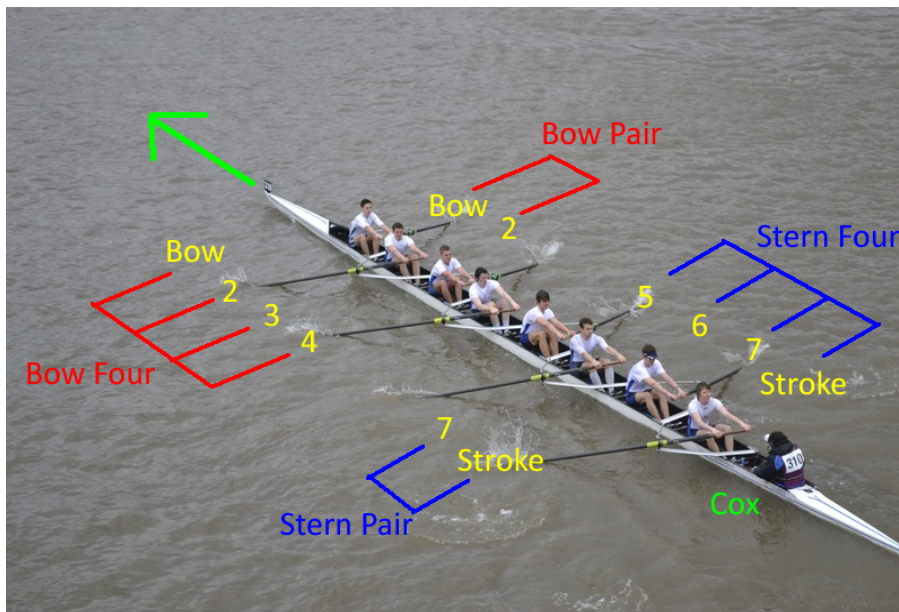
The **rigger** is what supports your blade and provides a point for it to pivot on.

The **footplate** (or **stretcher**) has shoes, clogs or straps on. It's adjustable for rowers of different heights.

The **slide** is the track the seat moves back and forth on. It is also adjustable (like the footplate).

The **seat**... well that's where you sit.

Boat Positions (Rowing)



This picture will help you to understand the layout of the boat, and what all the positions mean. The green arrow clarifies the direction the boat is moving.

In yellow are shown the names/numbers of all the different positions within the boat. When you're in the boat it's far easier to deal with numbers rather than people's names, due to crews changing from outing to outing.

The lines in red and blue represent groups of these positions which are given collective names. These are used by coaches and coxes when training and racing. The Bow Pair/Stern Four (etc) terminology can be extended to six rowers, where for example Stern Six would be Stroke, 7, 6, 5, 4 and 3.

Basic Rowing Techniques

You will be shown all this before your first outing, so don't panic if you don't quite get it at first... You will also be given loads of coaching advice in your first season of rowing: so though it'll seem quite hard at first, persevere and you'll get there before too long. Here are the key points:-

1. The basic idea is that the spoon of the blade is held nice and square in the water while you pull on the oar, to get the maximum driving force and use it to propel the boat (see picture on the left). If the spoon is under-square (top tilted back) it'll dig down deeper and you may "catch a crab" (not a good experience). If it's over-square (top tilted forward) it'll pop right out of the water when you pull on it (almost as bad).
2. When you are coming forward in preparation for the next stroke, it is usual to "feather" the blades (see picture on the right), to reduce wind drag and reduce the chance of clipping any waves. Feathering is not essential, though: it's just a refinement. The crucial thing is to keep the blade square in the water.

Square Blades



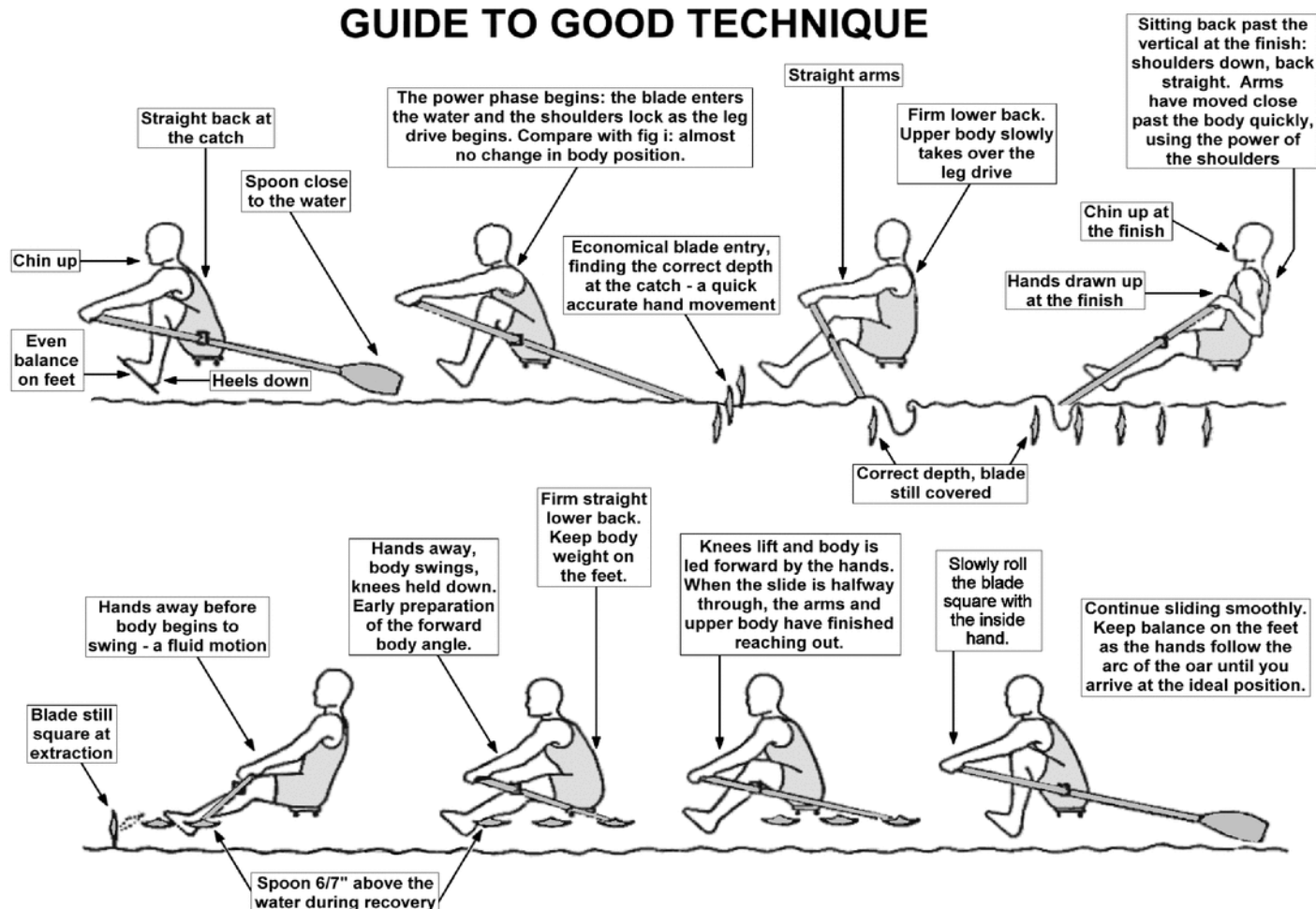
Feathered Blades



3. It's not necessary to grip the handle of the blade tightly: quite the reverse. If you relax your grip (to use your hands more like hooks) there is a flat on the back of the oar that will bear on the pin of the gate, and push it naturally into the right position. This *really* makes things a lot easier, so it's worth getting it right

4. The full sequence of a stroke and recovery is shown in the diagram below. It begins with you sat well forward on the slide with your arms extended, with a nice straight back and not leaning too far forward.
5. The blade is dropped neatly (and square !) into the water and pressure is applied to make the "catch"
6. The first half of the stroke begins by driving with your legs with the back "locked" near vertical, and the arms straight. About half way down the slide the back comes into play, and finally the arms are pulled up too.
7. At the finish your legs should be straight and your hands should be up near your chest, with the blade still in the water. But if you stop like this you will stop the boat, so you need to push your hands quickly down and away, so that the blade pops out of the water. As you do this you drop your wrists and turn the blade with your fingers to feather the blade.
8. Once your hands are well away (and not before) you begin to lean forward in a swinging motion, and when just past the vertical you also begin to bend your legs to come forward.
9. Finally, you smoothly roll the blade square ready for the next stroke (using the hand nearest the gate if rowing, or both hands (obviously) if you are sculling)

GUIDE TO GOOD TECHNIQUE



Coxing or Coach Calls

When you are in a boat one of the most important things is to listen to your cox or Coach, who looks out for both your safety and the safety of the boat. There are many calls that the cox can use, and they will vary from person to person. Here is a short list of some of the more common calls you will hear:

Number off from bow The first thing you'll hear when you get into the boat every outing. Starting from bow, each rower shouts their number/position to tell the cox they are ready to push off from the bank or pontoon.

Come forward (to row) Come forward on the slide to get into position to begin rowing: blades feathered

Get ready (to row) Square the blades, in the water

Paddle Light Begin rowing slowly and smoothly, with only light pressure

Paddle Firm Begin rowing slowly and smoothly, with firm pressure

Row Begin to row (at full pressure, if appropriate, e.g. if beginning a race)

Easy (all/oars) Stop rowing and sit upright with arms extended in a relaxed position. Keep your blade feathered and off the water as you would during the recovery part of the stroke.

....and drop From the easy position, drop your blade flat onto the water and relax.

Set the boat Raise or lower the handle of your blade when balancing to ensure the boat is level.

Hold her up With the blades square in the water, *push* them forward to stop the boat.

For more information

see also... https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_rowing_terms

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjoZpcjt1ng>

Map of our bit of the River



This section of the Southern Broads is where most, if not all your novice rowing will be done here. The map shows all the major locations along the river. A further map can be found in the boat house.

1. Lowestoft Rowing Club Boat House
2. Oulton Dyke ("The Cut")
3. River Waveney
4. Burgh St Peters
5. To Beccles
6. To Head of River start point & Somerleyton

River flow (Tide going out)



River flow (Tide coming in)



Miscellaneous



Ergos

Ergo is short for Ergometer, which is the technical name for a rowing machine. You will be very familiar with these in no time, as they make up a large portion of any crew's land training. When you first join Lowestoft Rowing Club you will be taught how to use them properly, then throughout your time you can use them to perfect technique as well as improve your fitness.