



# Rowing with RowPro

**NEW**

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**Illustrated Guide**



*Illustrated guide to*

# Rowing with RowPro

Version 5

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# 1. Welcome to RowPro

RowPro is software for indoor rowing that runs in any modern computer. You just download and install it from our website and activate it with a free trial or a product key. RowPro connects to your Concept2 Performance Monitor (PM) with a standard USB cable like the ones used for printers. You can get one from your computer store or Concept2. Then you start RowPro, choose the row you want to do, and click Row. RowPro sets up your row on the Concept2 PM, and you can start rowing.



The on-screen Oarsman in RowPro starts rowing alongside you, and synchronizes with your strokes to show you excellent rowing technique while you row. You can put a mirror on one side of you and your computer on the other side, and you'll soon see any differences and row better. Over a period of months, that makes a real difference to your rowing. And if you wear a heart rate monitor connected to your Concept2 PM, you can see charts of your pace and heart rate while you row.

RowPro automatically captures every stroke while you row and uploads each row to your RowPro online logbook. After rowing you can click the result in your logbook to see splits and charts of your performance, and analyze your progress vs. previous rows. You can also export results to your Concept2 online logbook. This saves you the hassle of manually entering all your results on the Concept2 website.

RowPro also has a complete training system with hundreds of training plan templates for weight, fitness and competition from beginner to elite. These plans are created by training guru Jon Ackland of Performance Lab International. Jon's a world expert in remote training, i.e. without the trainer being there, which is what you need at home. And there's a wizard to tailor each training plan to your intentions, abilities and physiology so it's just right for you.

Training plans make a big psychological difference to your rowing. We all intuitively understand the difference between 'will I row today' and 'what am I scheduled to row today'. It's much more likely you'll actually do the row if it's part of a training plan. In RowPro you can see the training workout you're scheduled to do each day, and RowPro sets it up directly onto your Concept2 PM. And of course your results are logged automatically so you can analyze them later.

You can also row with boats in other lanes. These can be any mix of pace boats, your own past rows, or downloaded Rowfiles of other people's rows. All these rows are recorded stroke by stroke, so they replay exactly as they were rowed. For example, if you did a short 10-stroke burst with 500m to go, the replay will do the same. The pace boats in RowPro can be programmed to change their pace and stroke rate during a row, up to 20 changes if you want. So you can for example program your race tactics into a pace boat.

You can even connect your computer to the Internet and row live in real time with other people all round the world. How cool is that? Any Internet connection will do - broadband, cable, even dialup, satellite and mobile connections. There are dozens of scheduled and on-the-spot online sessions rowed every day, with people of all ages rowing at all paces, and it's totally free for RowPro users. There's text chat before and after each row, and over time people build up great friendships with others this way. It's really fun and motivational for your rowing.

You can have up to 16 people in each online row, and there's a simple check-in just like at an airport. While you row, the others are in the lanes beside you, and their strokes and boat positions match exactly what they're doing in real life. It's a great way to interact with others and stimulate your rowing. There's a great community online with a real sense of fellowship because you're all rowers. It's a fantastic way to keep yourself motivated and keep rowing over the long term.

RowPro also has a coaching clinic with Olympic Rowing Coach Brian Hawthorne. This shows a 3D animation of the rowing stroke in slo-mo and at normal speed. Brian's clear coaching notes tell you how to row safely and powerfully, so you know exactly what to look for when you're watching your own rowing in the mirror. The fastest and most effective way to learn to row properly is to watch excellent technique before you take your first stroke. This is especially true for kids. The technique you see in the coaching clinic is exactly the same as you see the Oarsman do while you row, so it crosses over to your rowing, and over months you learn to row really well.



I welcome you to RowPro, and wish you all the best with your rowing. If you have any questions, please contact us at [assist@digitalrowing.com](mailto:assist@digitalrowing.com).

**Pete Loeffen** - President, Digital Rowing

## 2. First steps with RowPro

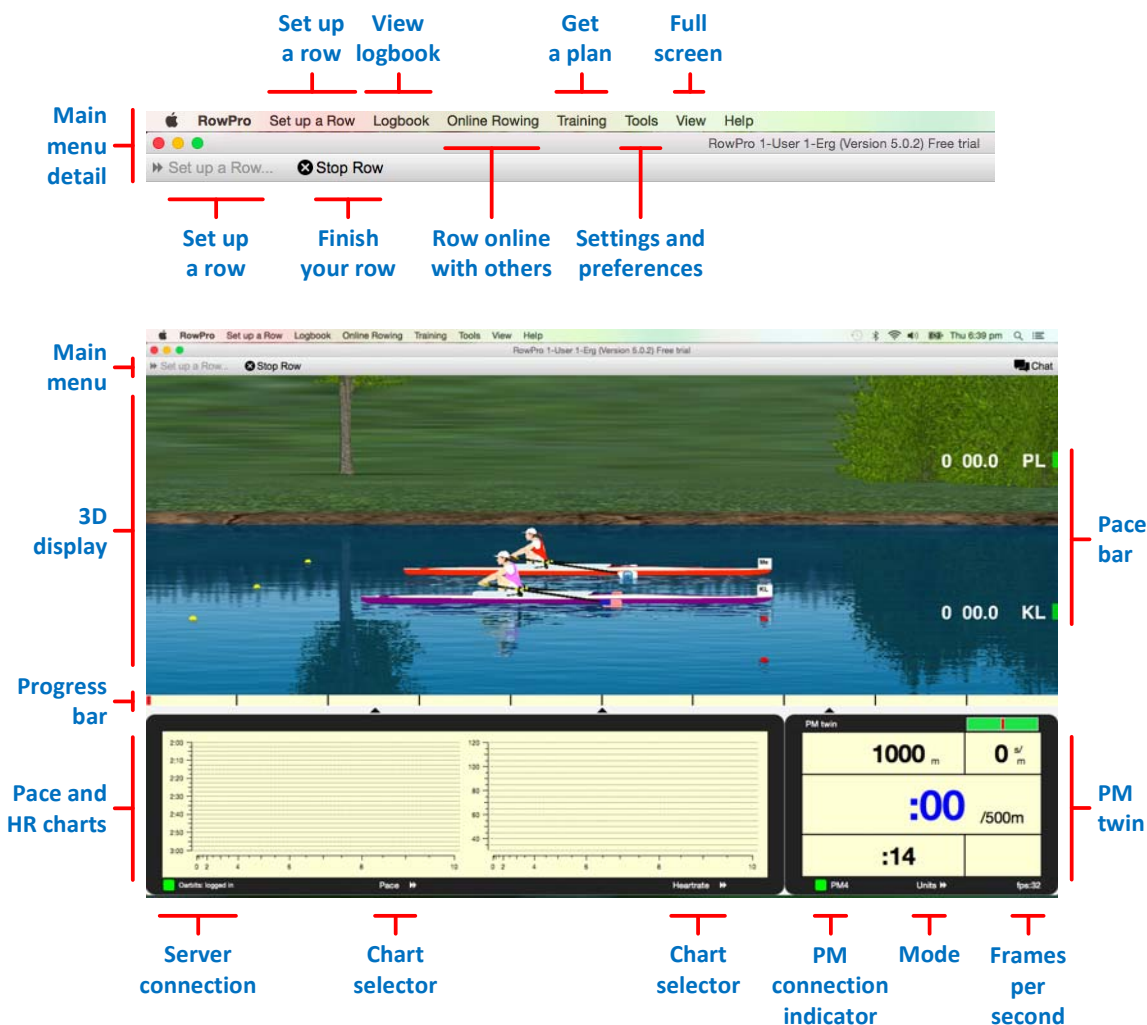
### Step 1: Connect your Concept2 PM and start RowPro

RowPro connects to your Concept2 PM5, PM4 or PM3 via a standard USB cable. Once it's connected, start RowPro by double-clicking the RowPro desktop icon.

**Note:** It's important to connect your Concept2 PM to your RowPro computer before you start RowPro. If you have problems connecting your Concept2 PM, check the info at [www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/connect.html](http://www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/connect.html).

### Step 2: Understand the In-Row Display

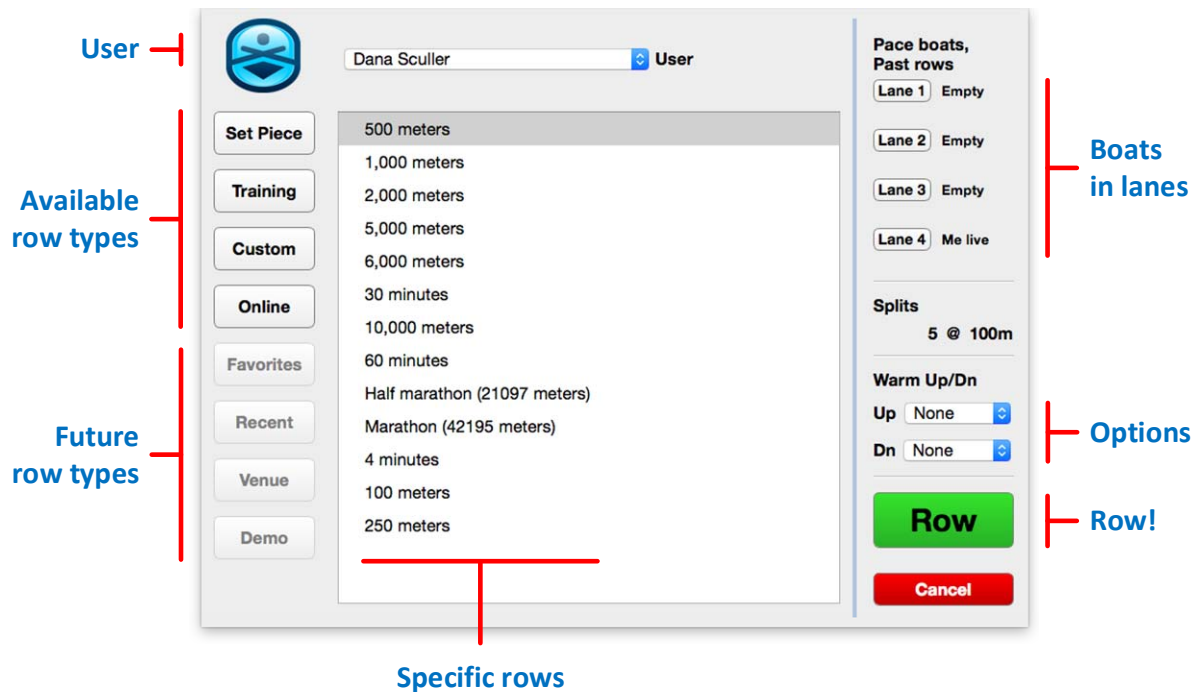
The main RowPro display screen is called the 'In-Row Display'. Before you row, familiarize yourself with the main parts of the In-Row Display shown below:



**Note:** The In-Row Display and menu are similar in Windows and Mac. For more info about the In-Row Display, see RowPro Help Online at [www.digitalrowing.com/help](http://www.digitalrowing.com/help).

## Step 3: Set up and row your first row

Let's make your first row simple – a 500m Set Piece. This is one of the standard Concept2 Set Piece rows. To set up the 500m Set Piece row, click **Set up a Row** on the RowPro main menu. The main parts of Set up a Row are shown below:



The basic sequence for using Set up a Row is:

1. Confirm you are set as the **User** at the top (so results go into your logbook).
2. Select the type of row you want to row. This could be a Set Piece, Training Session, Custom Row or Online Row. By default, **Set Piece** is selected.
3. Select the specific row you want from the list. For this first row, just leave the default **500 meters** row selected.
4. On the right side, notice the default settings – you'll be rowing alone in Lane 4 (nearest the camera), there will be five 100 meter splits recorded automatically, and you won't row a warm-up or warm-down. You can change these settings, but for now let's keep this first row simple by sticking with the defaults.
5. Now click the green **Row** button. RowPro will respond by setting up the 500m Set Piece on your Concept2 Performance Monitor and on the RowPro PM twin.
6. Now get on your Concept2 Indoor Rower, row the 500m Set Piece, and watch how RowPro responds to your rowing.

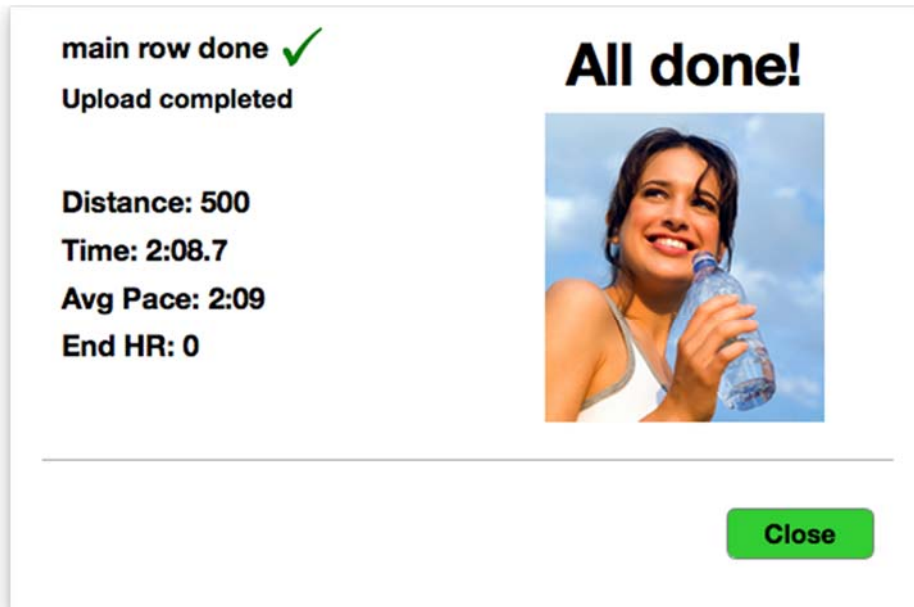
In the RowPro 3D In-row Display, the on-screen boat moves along the course, with the bow (front) of the boat matching the distance on your Concept2 Performance Monitor and the on-screen rower (called the Oarsman) matching your stroke timing.

**Note:** RowPro learns about each stroke once you have finished it. If you change your stroke rate, the Oarsman takes a stroke or two to re-synchronize with you.

While you row, the on-screen Pace Chart tracks your pace, and the numbers displayed on the on-screen PM twin match the numbers on your Concept2 Performance Monitor.

If you are wearing a HR monitor connected to your Concept2 Performance Monitor, then the on-screen HR Chart tracks your heart rate.

When you're finished rowing the 500 meters, you'll see the progress form below:



When you're ready, click **Close** on the progress form. RowPro then automatically uploads your results to your online logbook, and resets to the default 'Just Row' screen, ready for you to set up your next row.

## Step 4: Check your online logbook

On the RowPro main menu click **Logbook | Online Logbook**. You'll notice on the menu that RowPro also has a Local Logbook – that's for situations where your RowPro computer isn't connected to the Internet.

In your online logbook you'll see your 500-meter Set Piece listed. Every row you do with RowPro will automatically be added as another line entry in your online logbook.

**Note:** There are many functions available in your online logbook, for example viewing the details of a row in both chart and table format, comparing and analyzing similar rows, viewing your rowing history and statistics, exporting results to your Concept2 online logbook, and much more. For more info about the In-Row Display, see RowPro Help Online [www.digitalrowing.com/help](http://www.digitalrowing.com/help).



## Step 5: View the details of your row

Click the 500m Set Piece row to bring up the Details page. There you'll see a chart with a blue trace showing your pace for every stroke, and below the chart you'll see a table with 5 splits of 100m each, and totals for the entire row.

**Note:** If you were wearing a HRM while you did the row, and your HR was visible on the Concept2 PM display, you'd also see a red trace for your HR on the chart.

## Step 6: Export the row to your Concept2 online logbook

Concept2 provides free online logbooks where you can record all your rows. This can be very handy if you want to participate in Concept2 challenges or register for one of their Million Meter Clubs.

You can select rows in your RowPro online logbook and export them direct to your Concept2 online logbook. This is a great time-saver that eliminates all the manual double-entry work you'd otherwise have to do.

To export a row, click the Send button next to that row in your online logbook. The first time you will be asked to enter your Concept2 logbook info, and from then on you can just export rows.

**Note:** You can set your RowPro online logbook to automatically export new rows to your Concept2 online logbook. You can get your Concept2 logbook info from your Profile at the Concept2 website [www.concept2.com](http://www.concept2.com), and of course you will need to have a Concept2 online logbook.

## 3. Rowing with RowPro

We all know the old saying 'If all else fails, read the manual', but sometimes the fastest and best way to get started is to tap into a quick tutorial. This Rowing with RowPro illustrated guide gives you a step-by-step visual tutorial, and expertly helps you work out what rowing you need to do.

### Rowing with RowPro

Rowing with RowPro opens up a whole new world, and this guide gives you a tour of that world. It starts by showing you the right way to connect, row, view and upload your results, and use the 3D coaching clinic.

Possibly the most important section is working out what rowing you need to do. Now's definitely the time to settle into a good pattern (i.e. start as you mean to go on), because that's the key to getting the results you want from your rowing.

Once you're underway, there are other RowPro guides to help you focus on specifics like training plans, online rowing, pace boats and past rows. For now, it's all about getting off to a good start.

### Tracking your progress

Knowing you're on track to achieve the long-term results you want from your rowing is one of the most important keys to success. For most people, it's a must. All you need is a practical, easy way of recording your results and comparing your current and previous performances. That's where RowPro comes in.

When performance is your goal, your heart rate is a key metric you simply have to track, because it reveals how your body is responding to the workload. As your performance improves, your speed, strength and endurance go up, and your heart rate goes down.

Logging your total meters, time and pace is not enough to track your progress. It's good for milestone-oriented goals like million meter clubs and challenges, but not for knowing if you're maintaining or improving your fitness, or on track in your race preparation.

Proper tracking involves recording a lot of detail like strokes and heart rate. RowPro tracks all these items and more while you row, and makes it available to you in charts and tables so you can track your progress.

The best part is you don't need to do anything to collect the data, because RowPro does it all for you automatically. Learn more in the [Tracking Your Progress](#) mini-guide.

**Tip:** All the guides and mini-guides mentioned in this section are available for download at [www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/index.html](http://www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/index.html).

## Training with RowPro

Finding a training plan that's right for you can be quite a challenge, so to make it easy Digital Rowing has built a comprehensive training system directly into RowPro. You just click to get a plan, then click to set up each row. It's the simple and effective way to structure your rowing so you'll get the results you want.

The big question everyone faces at the start is "What rowing do I need to do to get the results I want?" And soon after that comes the realization "I really need a plan."

Digital Rowing has engaged training guru Jon Ackland of Performance Lab International to create a training system specifically for users of Concept2 Indoor Rowers.

The result is a huge library of hundreds of training plan templates for weight control, fitness and competition, suitable for the full spectrum of users from beginner to elite.

It's driven by a state-of-the-art Training Plan Wizard that makes it easy to select a suitable plan and tailor it to your age, weight, fitness level, rowing experience and training purpose, so you know it's right for you.

The fully illustrated [Training with RowPro](#) guide gives you step-by-step instructions for using the RowPro training system to structure your daily rowing.

## Pace boats and past rows

Pace boats and past rows open up a whole new dimension in your rowing – virtual competition. Pace boats and past rows can push you to perform better, or just help you hit your target pace. They're great for getting a sense of progress, or just for company while you row - a great source of motivation.

RowPro pace boats are smart - you can make them change pace at set points along the way, and you can even set the stroke rate of their 3D oarsman. That gives you a big range of options so you can tune the pace boat to do exactly what you want.

You can use pace boats for many purposes – to push you to perform better, to zone out mentally while you stay on your target pace, or to bring your tactical race plan to life for time trials.

Past rows can be even better - in many ways there's no finer pace boat than your own past rows. You get a strong sense of progress when you beat your own past performances, and that translates into great motivation.

RowPro makes it easy to row with your past rows by enabling you to choose them from your rowing log and use them to power boats stroke by stroke. That pin-point accuracy is what makes it so effective. Learn more in the [Pace Boats and Past Rows](#) mini-guide.

**Tip:** All the guides and mini-guides mentioned in this section are available for download at [www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/index.html](http://www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/index.html).

## RowPro online rowing

Online Rowing is live rowing with other RowPro users in real time via the Internet. It's free to all RowPro users. During an online row, each participant sees their boat and the other participants' boats on their RowPro screen, moving along exactly with the meters rowed by each participant, and matching their rowing action stroke by stroke.

There is a very different and quite unique feeling when you know the other boats beside you on the course are real people rowing with you in real time.

The online rowing community is full of helpful people who are only too keen to help new members get started. Their support and encouragement can be a great help to people who would otherwise be rowing alone. There's even an online rowing club called Oarbits where you can join online rows, see who's online, and check results.

The in-built text Chat is a key part of the Online Rowing experience. You'll quickly get to know the folks who row online regularly, and it's likely you'll go on to develop some great friendships online - they're a great bunch of people!

The fully illustrated [RowPro Online Rowing](#) guide gives you a step-by-step tutorial to get your online rowing off to a great start.

## RowPro crew rowing

RowPro Crew Rowing is group training or head-to-head team racing in 1x, 2x, 4x or 8x boats with other crews using RowPro, either at a single location in Venue mode, or spread across multiple locations in Online mode.

Crew rows can be anything from a group paddle to a full-on race. Even if your crew is not 'really' racing, their competitive instinct comes out and they will more likely than not try to keep up with or ahead of the other crews.

During crew rows, each participant crew sees their boat and the other crews' boats on their RowPro screen, moving along exactly in accordance with the average meters rowed by each crew. And for coaches and organizers, there's the added bonus that every stroke by every crew member is recorded automatically for later analysis.

Online Crew Rowing enables schools, colleges, clubs, universities, gyms, military units and many other organizations to compete with each other without needing to travel. This opens up a whole new realm of rowing activities, and enables local, regional, national and international online regattas.

The fully illustrated [RowPro Crew Rowing](#) guide gives you a step-by-step tutorial to get your crew rowing off to a great start.



## 4. Get the results you want

We're all rowing for a reason, and the bottom line is we need to get results from our rowing. It's not just about pulling the handle, it's also the pattern: How often? How fast? How long? Getting that pattern right is the key to getting the right results. That's where RowPro comes in. Technique, training plans, tracking, motivation - RowPro has all the tools you need to get the results you want.

### Rowing to get back in shape

If you're rowing to get back in shape, and then maintain a healthy fitness, you're not alone! Our research shows this is one of the common drivers that get people rowing.

RowPro has a large set of training plans for weight and fitness, plus an expert wizard to help you get the right plan to fit your physiology and available time.

RowPro automatically records every stroke so you can track your progress over time, and has a built-in 3D coaching clinic where you can learn good stroke technique.

So congratulations on making the first move, and check out the [Rowing to get back in shape](#) mini-guide to get off to a great start and get the results you want.

### Rowing for health and fitness

RowPro has a lifetime supply of training plans for fitness, plus an expert wizard to help you get the right plan to fit your physiology and available time.

These plans lift you out of the common trap of just settling into your favorite workout and doing that workout all the time. That's a recipe for quickly reaching a plateau and then getting limited improvements, plus it can become a real motivation issue.

RowPro also provides a wide variety of options, from virtual competition with pace boats and your own past rows, to rowing online with others worldwide in real time, which is hugely motivating and a fun way to mix it up a bit.

Check out the [Rowing for health and fitness](#) mini-guide to get off to a great start and stay on track to get the results you want.

### Training for competition

Finding a training plan that's right for you can be quite a challenge, so Digital Rowing has engaged training guru Jon Ackland of Performance Lab International to create a training system specifically for users of Concept2 Indoor Rowers.

The RowPro Training System is a huge library of hundreds of training plan templates suitable for the full spectrum of competitors from beginner to elite, plus an expert wizard that tailors each plan to your physiology, training goals and available time.

**Tip:** All the guides and mini-guides mentioned in this section are available for download at [www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/getresults.html](http://www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/getresults.html).

RowPro sets up each training workout onto your Concept2 Performance Monitor ready for you to row, and then records all your results directly from the Performance Monitor into both your RowPro local logbook and your RowPro online logbook.

Later, you can review training rows to see how you did, and compare them to similar training sessions to see how you're progressing towards your competition goals.

Check out the [Training for competition](#) mini-guide to get off to a great start and stay on track to get the performance you want.

## Rowing for cross-season fitness

This of course is the perfect use of a Concept2 Indoor Rower, because that's the reason the Concept2 founders invented it in the first place – to help on-water rowers maintain their form over winter while the rivers and lakes were frozen.

Whatever off-season mix of exercise you want, RowPro has solutions you can use: segment plans that can be part of wider fitness regimes, full plans to carry you right through, online rowing if you want company or competition, pace boats or past rows if you want benchmarks, and set pieces if you just want to do the meters.

This gives you all the flexibility you want, plus some structure where that's useful, plus the motivation to keep at it right through the off-season, so you emerge fit and ready to get back into your main sport after the break.

Check the [Rowing for off-season fitness](#) mini-guide to stay on track through the break.

## Rowing for medical therapy

If you're rowing to manage a medical condition, you're not alone. Our research shows recovering or maintaining your health is quite a common reason for rowing.

RowPro has a large set of 'lite' training plans for recovering or maintaining your health, plus a wizard to help you get a plan that fits your physiology and available time.

RowPro automatically records every stroke so you can track your progress over time, and has a built-in 3D coaching clinic where you can learn good stroke technique so you avoid injury and setbacks.

Check out the [Rowing for medical therapy](#) mini-guide to ensure your rowing produces the results your body needs.



# 5. Using RowPro for specific tasks

Need motivation? Wanting to track your progress better? Looking for ways to improve your stroke technique? Or are you just wanting to row with pace boats or your own past rows? RowPro has all the tools you need and more. These new RowPro mini-guides will help you get on the right track.

## Improve your stroke technique

Good stroke technique makes you look and feel like a pro when you row and gives you a sense of mastery that stimulates your rowing. Good technique also feels a lot better when you row – more relaxed, less strenuous, and decreased risk of muscle injury.

If you row 3 x 20 minutes per week, that adds up to around 75,000 strokes per year, which means good technique is the key to staying injury-free long-term.

Good stroke technique is also more efficient. As your stroke technique improves, your speed, strength and endurance go up, and your effort and heart rate come down. That all adds up to improved performance.

Rowing technique videos can show you good technique, but translating that into your own good technique is another story entirely. RowPro is specifically designed to overcome this challenge so you really do develop good technique in your own rowing.

Check out the new [Good stroke technique](#) mini-guide to learn how to improve your stroke technique with RowPro.

## Use RowPro for motivation

There's no doubt that sticking with your rowing over the long term is the key to success. And that means maintaining your motivation over the long term is vital to getting the lifelong health and fitness outcomes you want from your rowing. The trick is finding effective ways to do that.

Research into the success factors driving long-term exercise programs like rowing clearly shows that your motivation is the most important, enduring and effective contributor to keeping up your rowing over the long term. Bottom line - it's essential.

Most rowers are busy people, so each row faces a daily contest with work, family and other activities. As a result, people's rowing tends to fall away over time - research shows that without RowPro, on average it's already down 15% after just 1 year.

RowPro overcomes this challenge by being your constant rowing companion and lifelong motivator, providing a mix of mental and physical boosters to stimulate your rowing during the weeks, months and years of active rowing.

Check out the new [Using RowPro for motivation](#) mini-guide to learn how to use RowPro to stimulate your rowing.

**Tip:** All the guides and mini-guides mentioned in this section are available for download at [www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/howtos.html](http://www.digitalrowing.com/rowing/howtos.html).

## School and college rowing

Concept2 Indoor Rowers give schools an excellent opportunity to increase student participation in school PE and sports activities. We asked schools running successful rowing programs: "What are the key factors in your success?" Here's what they said:

1. **Attracting students to participate** – Using technology to make indoor rowing visual and cool, to make it feel like a computer game that they can have fun playing while they exercise.
2. **Overcoming the practical challenges** – Providing rowing coaches with tools to quickly create training programs, teach rowing technique, and record and analyze results, so they can handle larger groups of students.
3. **Keeping students motivated** – Enabling students to compete with themselves via intra-school or inter-school team competitions to transform the PE activity into a competitive sport with longer-term development opportunities.

Schools say getting students to want to take part is the most critical success factor - the challenge is to attract students not involved in mainstream PE and sports.

Check out the new [School & college rowing](#) guide to learn how to use RowPro to run your own indoor rowing program.

## Online regattas

Online regattas are small collections of RowPro online rows arranged into a regatta format by an organization for the benefit of its members.

**Online** because the participants are not usually in the same location – they are participating over the Internet using the RowPro online rowing system. Participants might be at home, or in schools, colleges, gyms, clubs or institutions – anywhere there's a Concept2 Indoor Rower, RowPro computer, and an Internet connection.

**Mini** because the methods used to run these regattas work well for up to 50 boats. For bigger regattas, a full online regatta is needed.

**Regattas** because these are organized events rather than just people rowing online together. The organizer decides what the regatta format and timing will be, and controls the regatta.

Check out the new [RowPro online regattas](#) guide to learn how to use RowPro to run your own online regatta.





## 6. Strategies for long-term success

Given that the prime goal of most indoor rowing is to achieve or maintain lifelong healthy fitness, we define successful indoor rowing as achieving the results you want and keeping up your rowing over the long term.

The good news is that your rowing success is based on a number of well-researched factors, all of which you can control. And it's not hard - you just need to make the right moves. Check out the new [Secrets of successful indoor rowing](#) guide to learn how to set yourself up for long-term success.

### Strategies for staying motivated long-term

RowPro has a full suite of motivation boosters that reflect the surprisingly wide range of things people find motivational. This enables you to select the motivators that fit you exactly and really help you stick with your rowing.

- Just being able to track your progress gives you a tangible feeling of accomplishment that motivates you to continue.
- People find 'soft competition' very motivating. Top of the list is the ability to 'race' your past self. Also on this list is rowing vs. pace boats and people's downloaded Rowfiles. Rounding out this list is live rowing with other people online, where you're not officially racing but can't help but get caught up in mini-competitions with adjacent rowers or online rowing buddies.
- If your problem is feeling bored while you row, just the 3D on-water scene on the RowPro display is tremendously motivating, mentally lifting you out of your indoor environment and onto the sparkling virtual river. In most people's minds, boats and water beat machines and rooms hands down.
- If you find rowing alone at home a bit lonely, online rowing is just the tonic you need. The company, community, companionship and interaction via chat, forums and email with other rowers online is a proven major motivator.
- If you regularly suffer the 'will I row today' inertia, the 'commitment' of having signed up to row a scheduled session online with others is the catalyst that gets you on the machine.
- Also, the 'commitment' of having a scheduled training plan session due that day is the catalyst that gets you on the machine. It provides the critical mind-shift from 'will I row today' to 'what am I due to row today'.

Everyone is different, and no doubt some of these motivators will resonate with you more than others.

It's important to at least try each of them, so you can find out and maybe surprise yourself with what works best for you.

Remember, the one word that comes up with the feedback from almost every RowPro user survey is 'motivation'. For most people, RowPro provides the motivation to row.

## Strategies for avoiding injury

To keep rowing over the long term it's essential that you don't injure yourself, particularly from the rowing stroke action that you'll repeat many times over a lifetime.

**Note:** If you row a 20-minute workout 3 times a week, over a year you'll row around 750,000 meters. At an average of 10 meters per stroke, that's 75,000 strokes per year and a whopping one million strokes over 13 years.

The key strategies for avoiding injury are:

- **Warm-ups and warm-downs** – Yes, you already know this, but don't let knowing it replace doing it. Warm up and warm down before and after every row.
- **Good technique** – Physiotherapists know your lower back can be loaded with up to 7 times your body weight when you row, and the common problem of 'shooting your slide' is a significant contributor to that load. Also, if your elbows aren't completely straight during the part of the drive when your big leg muscles are working hardest, then over time you risk overloading your elbow. So take the time to study proper technique in the Coaching Clinic, and keep working at it.



## 7. Help, assistance & troubleshooting

### RowPro help

Your first port of call is RowPro Help Online at [www.digitalrowing.com/help](http://www.digitalrowing.com/help). This covers all the common problems you may encounter and how to resolve them.

### RowPro support

Next stop is RowPro Support at [www.digitalrowing.com/support](http://www.digitalrowing.com/support) where you'll find all the RowPro documentation, guides and mini-guides, plus FAQs on all common topics.

### Information and assistance

If all else fails, for free and friendly personal assistance by the people who know RowPro inside out, just email [assist@digitalrowing.com](mailto:assist@digitalrowing.com).