

**DON'T DO THAT**  
EXERCISE AND TRAINING  
TECHNIQUES THAT YOU  
SHOULD NOT DO

# Be Cautious with Rowing

Rowing is a great exercise for developing leg and arm strength. It is also a superior cardiovascular exercise. Unfortunately, given the nature of the sport it does have a high incidence of lower back pain and overuse injuries (see study). **Rowers have some of the highest incidence of low back pain in athletes.** Form must be perfect to avoid low back issues when it comes to rowing. The spine should not be flexed to gain more motion. **Rather the spine should be held in neutral and should be stable to deliver the force from the legs to the arms.** Did you know that improperly supported forces approaching 1000N can be loaded through your lumbar spine if imbalances or errors in your technique are present. That's over 100kg through your spine, every stroke! See article Besides having good form condition your body to do the activity. Just do not do rowing in other words. If you are going to do this sport then develop muscles to support it especially the core (see basic core exercises-see page 3). Also, after I would suggest performing the Cobra Stretch.



Posture and Back Health: Imagine that you have a rod in your back keeping your spine straight. While you may lean back slightly during some phases of your stroke, this should be minimal and the spine should not curve or arch; be sure you're carrying your weight on your buttocks, not on your lower back. It's especially important not to curve your back and hunch forward to grab the handlebar or when your body rides forward on the rails. Straighten your arms to a full extension rather than curving forward to prevent middle and upper back injuries. Leaning too far back can aggravate the lower back, so be aware of your posture at all times to avoid rowing machine dangers.

Keep Wrists and Arms Straight: Some of the most painful rowing injuries are to the wrist, including carpal tunnel injuries. These are often the result of twisting your wrists into awkward positions while rowing. To protect your wrists, always keep them palms down and straight throughout each stroke. Resist the impulse to bend your arms at the wrist, which is one of the most common rowing machine dangers. Novice rowers often let the bulk of their weight rest on their arms and pull hard on the handlebar to move through their stroke. This can lead to serious arm injuries. You should push off with your legs rather than pulling with your arms at the beginning of each stroke so that most of the resistance is on your legs, particularly your thighs.