



# ROW WELL PROGRAMME

ROW WELL

*“As you progress aim for two dedicated core sessions per week”*

 **So where now** – you’re progressing in the boat with regular on-the-water coaching – how does core play into that? Here are some ideas and exercises that you can try with your friends, parents and coach. If the river is flooded or the pitches are waterlogged it’s worth switching to a ‘core’ session – perhaps with a short dance/aerobics session too?

 **Key exercises** – your core muscles are best exercised when you are warmed up – they are easier to find and fire up when warm. Try practicing one each day when you come home from school OR build them into your daily routine – like sitting on your balance ball to watch TV. Practice them with a friend who is also keen to improve their rowing /sculling stroke. Mastering the ‘Core 4’ exercises will help you prepare for more ‘core’ work.

**Programme** – progress to having one dedicated session per week – after water work, a light ergo or gentle run (which you can do from home). Don’t think of them as ‘extra’ exercises – think of them as the ‘real deal’ for that session. Take 10-20 mins and

practice a set number [try four] each session. You can also build some of these into cardio circuits - but as you speed up doing them as circuits please keep movements ‘full range’ and smooth.

**Row ‘smart’ (& stable)** – These routines are designed to complement water work. Strengthening your ‘Kinetic Chain’ (all the muscles that go towards propelling the boat through the water) will improve your posture and coordination and make your stroke more effective (faster!). Talk to your coach/sports teacher and get some of these routines included in gym work. And even have a special session once per week with ‘balls & bands’.



**How many ‘reps’?** – don’t be tempted to ‘bash out the reps’ keep movement full range, slow and controlled. To help you we’ve added a guide number of reps to most exercises. This shows the range - start with the lower number, and progress to the higher as you improve.



ROW WELL

- EXERCISES
- WARM UP
- SESSIONS
- KINETIC CHAIN

# SQUAT



Squats are a classic, multipoint exercise for most sports. They target all-body but particularly lower body muscles that extend your hips and knees. They build good ankle, knee and hip mobility as well as stable weight distribution, good alignment and thoracic control. They are also an excellent way to work the large muscles of your back.

Start with your feet shoulder width apart. Squat down with control so that your hips are lower than your knees (knee angle should be 90° or less). Return to standing position. The action is the same as sitting up and down from a low chair. Keep your knees in line with your toes as you go up and down, rather than moving left or right. Don't let your hips shift backwards.

**Progression:** Once mastered try from a low step/seat (no weights).

Change feet position every 5 reps (together, wide apart and staggered). Add small dumbbells – or bands over the shoulder and below your feet. Add VERY low weights to help stability – held in FRONT not BEHIND the shoulders.

**Easier:** Do quarter squats to a chair and slow them down until your control and strength improve.



## TOP TIPS

Keep feet flat on the floor. Use a chair as a target to rehearse the movement, but only just touch your bottom on it, rather than sit down completely.

“Really helps connect my strong & stable leg drive putting more power into my stroke”

## ROW WELL

## PURPOSE



Improves lower limb strength, knee stability, lower limb joint mobility & core control when changing direction.

## PURPOSE



A good squat is achieved through good ankle, knee, hip mobility and stability; good weight distribution (through the foot-weight will primarily be acting just under the ankle); good alignment (knees tracking over the toes with hips square on); good thoracic control where a neutral spine position is maintained throughout the movement.



# SUPERWOMAN

ROW WELL



**In four-point kneeling; keep the knees perpendicular under the hips & the hands under the shoulders, with the spine in neutral.**

**Engage pelvic floor & slowly slide out one leg until straight, then lift. Slowly raise the opposite arm & balance keeping the back & hips still.**

**Return to start position & complete 10 reps on each side. Complete the transition smoothly.**

**Progression:** Start with ten repetitions on each diagonal then progress to 3 sets on each diagonal. Transition between sides without moving the head. Increase the challenge further by bringing one knee across to the opposite elbow without flexing the spine or moving the head. Try lying on your balance ball, with hands/feet on the floor – head still with a smooth transition.

**Easier:** Just lift one arm, then the opposite leg - keep the transition smooth & controlled.

## TOP TIPS

Hold your core as you transition from one side to the other

Focus on a spot on the floor, relax and use your stable core to make the movement smooth and consistent

## PURPOSE



Helps work your core ACROSS limbs to help rotational movement and give more depth (Asymmetry) to your core. Reduces risk of injury.

“I soon got the hang of ‘Superwomans’ – and then... I felt like one!”





# SITTING BALANCE BALL - DYNAMIC

ROW WELL



Sitting on the gym ball, slowly raise one leg off the ground keeping stable in your spine. If you are not controlled, raise the heel only. Slowly raise the arms overhead, relaxing the neck area & keeping the shoulder blades down. Repeat 3 sets of ten. As above, change legs & take the arms out to the side. As above take one arm simultaneously to the side. Do 10 on each side.

**Progression:** Add small dumbbells.

**Easier:** Instead of raising the whole foot off the floor raise up onto the toes. Observe in a mirror.



"This helps me find those deep muscles that support my back and coordinate my arm and leg movement"

## PURPOSE



Establishes neutral spine & general support of lower back & challenges oblique muscles which are needed for sweep oar. Encourages sitting up on sitting bones.

## TOP TIPS

Keep sitting up on sitting bones

Keep level in the pelvis. Keep lower trapezius engaged (under the shoulder blades)

# SPINE CURL AND ARMS

## PURPOSE



Maintain a stable pelvis whilst performing movement with the arms. Good transferable skills to the boat - letting you focus on energy transfer whilst maintaining stability.

## TOP TIPS


Keep level in your pelvis & hips

Keep neck muscles relaxed & breathe

Perform flowing movements

## ROW WELL



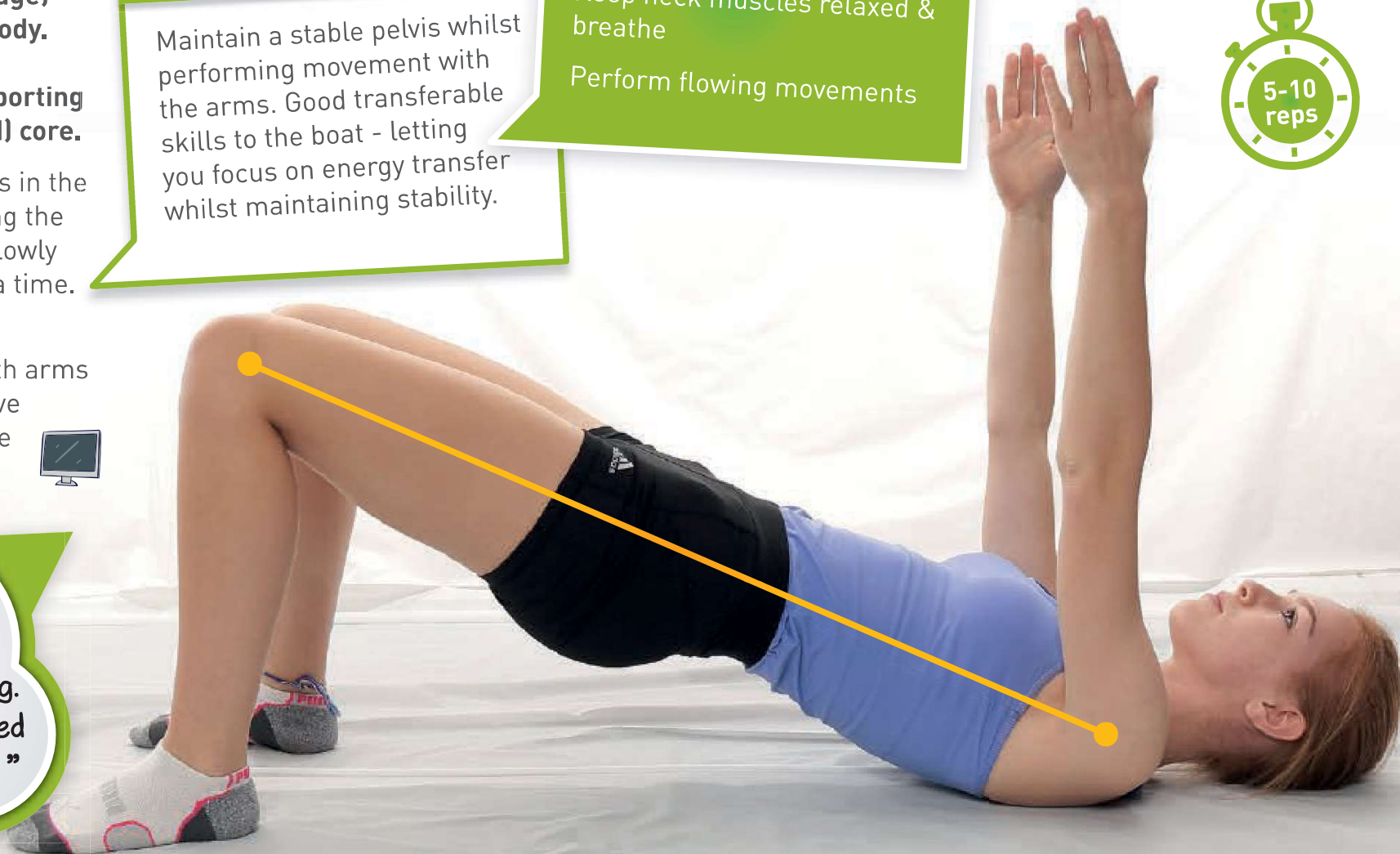
 Perform the spine curl (bridge) with arms alongside your body. Pause and hold when your shoulders and feet are supporting your straight (and stabilised) core.

**Progression:** Raise the arms in the air above your chest. Keeping the shoulder blades engaged, slowly take one arm to the side at a time. Perform two sets of twenty.

**Easier:** Perform starting with arms wide, at your sides to improve shoulder-core stability. Once stable, lift alternate arms.



“Helps me stabilise my pelvis whilst arms are moving. All my energy is then directed at moving the boat forward”



# HAMSTRING CURLS ON BALLS

ROW WELL



**Really important routine for good slide control. With the heels resting on the gym ball & the legs extended, perform a spine curl & pause at the top.**

**Slowly dig the heels into the ball & roll the ball towards you then push back. Perform 2 sets of ten.**

**Progression:** Try raising your hands straight up above your chest to destabilise shoulders to core.

Use one leg at a time, performing one set of ten on each side. Increases load on the oblique muscles used in sweep rowing.



**Easier:** Perform with a towel under your hips & don't lift off, just use legs to curl ball under your heels.



*"Helps me control my slide recovery and have the confidence to be patient as I 'roll out' to front stops"*

PURPOSE



Shifts the slide recovery movement from back muscle to core and hamstrings. And helps to work – 'stretcher to seat' – rather than 'seat to stretcher'.

TOP TIPS

Keep your hips up & level, try to use core and hamstrings to draw the ball towards you – use glutes not back your muscles

Try this exercise whilst seated, pulling a fixed band back with each ankle





# BANDS, BALL & RUBBER SCULLER

ROW WELL



Here's a great exercise that uses BOTH bands & balls to help you stabilise through the stroke to the finish. Sitting on gym ball with some rubber tubing or band connected to a central point, keep the shoulders down & perform a sculling action. Perform for 3 x 1 mins. Don't 'pull hard' pull slow & feel the band tension challenge your hip & lower back stability.



**Progression:** Raise one leg off the floor, fix band rigidly to one side and perform a rotational sweep action. Try 'sculling' with BOTH feet off the floor – you may want to have a friend help support you.

**Easier:** Get used to 'sculling' & side (asymmetric) movements before taking your feet off the floor.

"This is a fun way to help coordinate body movement round the finish – firing off most of my abs and reducing risk of shoulder injury"

## PURPOSE



Helps you 'sit up' & maintain 'asymmetric' stability at the finish with a strong neck & spine linked to the core.

## TOP TIPS

Keep neck relaxed & sit 'up' on your sitting bones

Maintain posture & lift the blade from the shoulders



# DYNAMIC PLANK



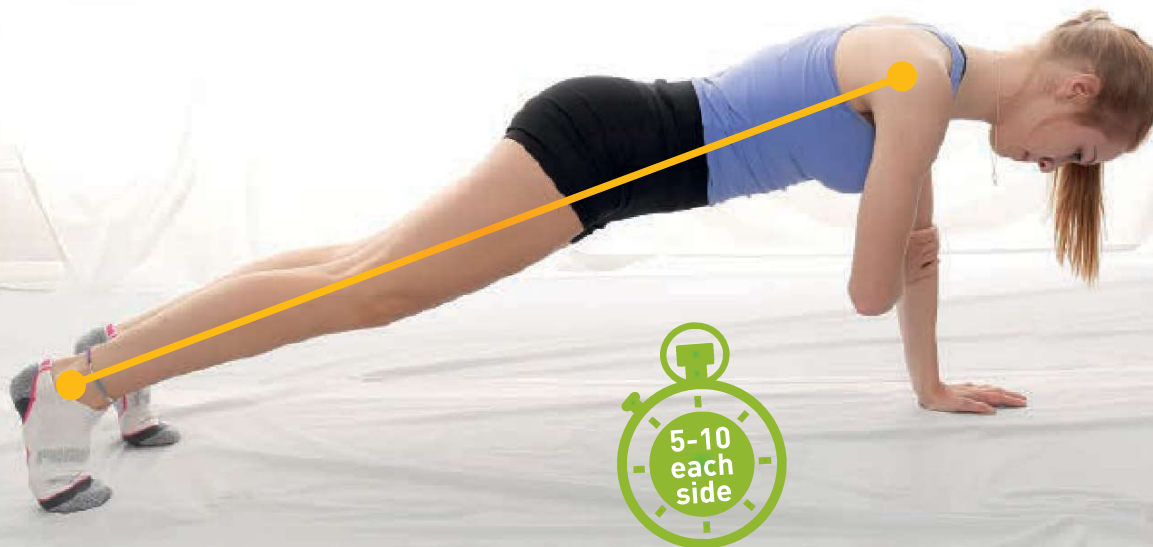
Go into a front plank position, stabilise (feel that core) & then slowly take one hand off the floor to touch the opposite elbow. Perform 10x then repeat on the opposite side. Repeat x 3.

**Progression:** Try extending your non-supporting hand above your head & twisting. Try to get your arms in a line.

Extend your arm movement to touch your shoulder.

Start in the plank position & take one leg out to the side directing the knee to the shoulder (hurdle action). Alternate performing 2 sets of twenty.

**Easier:** Practice the arm movements with your knees on the floor. Then try to lift up into the plank position.



"This helps me get all my power moving the boat at the finish by reducing energy wastage in my global muscles"

## ROW WELL

## PURPOSE



An essential exercise to work the oblique muscles in the abdomen creating a stable centre to the body as you move the arms. Great to improve stability during sweep oar movement.

## TOP TIPS

Maintain neutral spine keeping hips level & shoulder blades flat on the spine

Don't let your head & shoulder girdle 'tip' to the side



# SIDE PLANK - DYNAMIC

"I can feel my oblique abs strengthening to help transfer power energy smoothly through my core and spine during the stroke drive"

ROW WELL

## PURPOSE




This works the deep muscles in the side nearest to the floor and the outside of the bottom hip. Transferred to the boat you will be stable as you reach across to place the blade in the water.

## TOP TIPS

Keep level in the centre of the body avoiding rolling the hips forwards or back

Let your head turn to look at the floor as you sweep your upper arm down

 Set up a side plank by lying on one side on the floor with the knees one on top of each other (stacked). Engage your core as you lift up into a 'plank' position. Keep core engaged by deliberately focusing on those muscles. Hold & stabilise for 15-30 secs. Perform 2 sets of ten, then reverse to the opposite side.

**Progression:** Sweep your upper hand under your shoulder & through/under your body – raise arm up to the front, then above your head & then lower.

**Easier:** Start by just 'swiveling' your upper arm back & forth above your body. Feel the changes this creates in your core stability.

Rest from the side plank between reps.




# UPRIGHT ROW

“Strengthening my deltoids helps me maintain power at the finish”

ROW WELL



 All rowing-type exercises help you find and connect a broad range of muscles groups. Getting these muscles to fire at the right time and in the right order takes practice. Upright Row will particularly help your middle & posterior deltoids and biceps.

Start with one foot on the middle of the band, hold each side of the band in your hands. Then cross the bands so you are holding the left-side of the band in your right hand and vice-versa. Hold each end of the band in a fist with the palms of your hand facing your body. Your arms should be relaxed with your hands hanging freely.

Keep your hands close together; pull your elbows up to head height. Your fists should be around chin height with palms down. Slowly return to your starting position by lowering your hands first and then your elbows in a controlled manner.

**Progression** - Pick the band up closer to your feet & stand up straight before you begin the exercise. Try using a kettle bell - but don't 'jerk' the initial movement and keep

your head still. The great thing about bands is that the resistance increases progressively.

**Easier** - use a lighter band.

**3 sets of 12 reps**

## PURPOSE

Helps to engage the upper (shoulder) and lower (hip) girdles and transfer power between them.

## TOP TIPS

Imagine you are standing between two glass panels - one in front and one behind you

Try not to let your elbows touch either panel



# BALANCE AND STABILITY - ERGO

ROW WELL



Use a Sit Fit (balance cushion), on the seat & warm up on the ergo. Stabilise on your 'sitting bones' (the knobby bits). Begin with arm movements from backstops. Then gradually reach out with normal slide progression. Try to 'hang' off the handle as you stabilise at the catch. Build up to enable you to do a 2 min warm up.

**Progression:** Extend to multiple sets of 2 min to establish endurance in your core. Take one foot out of the straps.

Reducing the drag on the ergo challenges the core, enhancing greater stability.

**Easier:** Reduce time to 30 sec then 1 min, lower the feet position.



"This helps me find those deep muscles that support my back & coordinate my arm and leg movement"

## PURPOSE



Helps control & stabilise as you approach the catch. Maintain posture & lift the blade from the shoulders

## TOP TIPS

Keep arms & neck area relaxed

Maintain a semi flexed knee throughout

Relax grip on the handle, maintain neutral & relax the spine


Activate leg drive with arms



These are just some of the routines that you can use to improve your performance in the boat. The digital version has 'in context' links to other content from our partners and contributors.

These HerMoJo exercises are all about developing functional strength for effective and economical movement – not building bulk strength! Mix them up with the other ideas, strategies and concepts in the manual to build your 'Inner Strength and Outer Confidence' MoJo.

**Moving Forward** - now you've mastered some of the routines you can start to include them in your training programmes.

 **Coaches** – use the CORE 4 to introduce your athletes to these ideas as part of your land sessions. At the same time get them used to the idea of functional strength for better, long term boat propulsion. Then see if you can introduce sessions after water work – ideally starting with one, then moving to two dedicated sessions per week for senior girls. You will already know how

important it is to get stabilising routines perfect. Working on their own, teenagers will find it very hard without some support from you, parents etc. So you might think about getting a proactive physiotherapist to join you for one session per month. Check out the OwnIT! Section below – help girls to tune it and maybe use a land session to help them set up shorter sessions at home – based on OwnIT!



**OwnIT!** - set your own core programme. Once you've mastered the CORE 4 and the ROW WELL section why not try your own sessions at home? Here's a suggested workout (and we mean workout – core work is hard!) which has a set intro - followed by variations which you can tailor to suit. Ask your coach for help with routines and check with your parents that where you are working out is safe. Don't forget you can supplement core sessions easily – just by sitting on a balance ball.

**Try to build your dedicated core sessions into a programme something like this:**

- Warm up – just sitting & chilling on a balance ball
- Start – kneel in front of your ball
- Roll out & stretch
- Superwoman on ball
- Press-up on ball
- Roll out – ab crunch
- Plank on Ball
- Ball Crunchie
- Hamstring curls
- Flys on ball
- Roll back with bands, oblique
- Hamstring curls with bands

**Finish by injecting some general core work with bands**