

The Best Rowing Machine Workout For Fat Loss

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The Secret To Burning Fat And Building Muscle... While Sitting Down



[Amy Schlinger](#)

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If you're looking to change up your cardio routine and try something different than your usual running route, you may want take a seat...on the rowing machine. Rowing is a full-body cardiovascular workout, that gets the blood pumping from stroke number one, explains Erin Landy, coach at [Row House](#) in New York City and former collegiate D1 rower for Georgetown University. And you read that correct—full body.

“A common misconception about rowing is that it’s all upper body,” says Landy. “Yes, you will gain strength in and tone the upper body with every stroke, but that is almost a by-product of the sheer momentum built up by the bigger muscles in the body.” The breakdown of power

according to the Landy: 60 percent comes from the legs (quads and hamstrings), 30 percent comes from the core (abs and back), and the other 10 is the upper body.

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Perfect Your Form

Form is essential to ensure that one, you don't hurt yourself, and two, you're being as efficient as possible in order to get the best workout on the erg or rowing machine. There are different names for the parts that make up the perfect stroke: the catch, drive, finish and recovery. Start by sitting up tall on the rower, shoulders back, hands loosely holding onto the handle, eyes up. The catch is the beginning of the stroke—your arms are extended forward, knees directly over your ankles, explains Row House coach Juliet Teller. Then comes the drive— “pressing from your feet until your legs are fully extended,” says Teller. “Once your legs are down and you're at the back of the rower, tilt your upper body slightly backward, and pull the handle into your chest directly below your pec muscles, for the finish of the stroke.” The recovery is the return to the front of the machine, reversing the stroke starting with the arms, followed by the chest, then legs.

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The Benefits of Rowing

Beyond being a killer full-body workout, rowing also has other benefits. First, it can help improve your posture. “When done correctly, each stroke builds your core and forces you to release your shoulder and back muscles, so you grow taller and more open through your chest,” explains Teller.

Secondly, rowing can help build up your stamina. “It gets your heart pumping oxygenated blood more effectively through your vascular system,” explains Landy. “This gives muscles the oxygen they need to continue working.” The more you row, the more efficient your body gets at processing that oxygen. In other words, the fitter you become.

Rowing is also low-impact so anyone can do it. It doesn't tear down your body over time the way plugging in miles of road runs might. “There is no pounding on hard asphalt or abrasive movements,” says Teller. “It's essentially like weight lifting from a seated position.” The beauty of the sport is that you get out of it what you put in.

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Want to give the rower a try? To help get you in shape, we asked Teller to share two of her favorite rowing workouts. “I had a coach once tell me “stroke rate plus split time equals success,” says Teller. “The erg is your friend.” Try adding each of these workouts to your weekly routine to up the burn and get you summer body ready.

The Workouts

Summertime 30

Stroke rate: Number of strokes per minute (s/m)

2 min, 22 stroke rate

2 mins, 24 stroke rate

2 mins, 26 stroke rate

2 mins, 28 stroke rate

1 min, 30 stroke rate

1 min, active recovery at 22 stroke rate

10 minutes total. Focus on split consistency

Then:

1 min sprint at 22 stroke rate

30 second recover

1 min sprint at 24 stroke rate

30 second recover

1 min sprint at 26 stroke rate

30 second recover

1 min sprint at 28 stroke rate

30 second recover

6 minutes total. Focus on lowering split each round

Then:

5 min row, 26-28 stroke rate

4 min row, 26-28 stroke rate

3 min row, 26-28 stroke rate

2 min row, 26-28 stroke rate

1 min row, 26-28 stroke rate

All with focus on stroke and split consistency. This should be right around 6500-7000 meters for men. The emphasis in using this stroke rate is for power to be in the drive out and recovery on the way in. Consistency is always optimal in rowing.

Snooze Button Workout

Start with five minutes of consistent rowing between a 24-26 stroke rate.

Perform two total rounds of Snooze.

500-meter row x 3

750-meter row x 2

1000-meter row x 1

3,250 meters total. keeping stroke under 28.

2 minutes rest

Repeat

7,000 meters total