

20-Minute Totally Beginner-Friendly Rowing Workout

 blog.fitbit.com/algo.html

May 5, 2017



There's a reason rowing studios are popping up in major cities nationwide: Rowing workouts target your arms, legs, back, and core *and* burn serious calories. "No other sport—not indoor cycling, nor climbing, nor running—targets as many muscles as effectively as rowing does," says Eric Von Froehlich, founder and coach at [Row House](#) in New York City. "It's tremendous for weight loss, it helps to improve your posture, it engages your core, and helps you tone all over."

But you don't have to belong to one of these studios or be a former collegiate rower to reap the results. Just take some time to perfect your rowing stroke and then get started with the workout below. "Rowing allows people of all fitness levels to push themselves and see tangible progress each time they're on the machine," says Von Froehlich

Rowing Workout for Beginners

Never rowed before? Don't be intimidated: Von Froehlich created this simple, 21-minute rowing workout to help you ease into it. If you haven't already, take a look at this [rowing primer](#) before getting started.

WARM UP

Arms-only row: Sitting tall with your legs and arms straight, pull your elbows back and down to hit the “finish” position of the stroke. Repeat for 30 seconds.

Hinge of the body: Add in the forward-and-back body movement, so you’re leaning slightly back as you pull your arms towards your chest. Repeat for 30 seconds.

Half slide: In addition to the first two steps, begin bending your knees and then driving your legs straight as you bring your body to the finish position. Repeat for 30 seconds.

Full stroke: Now, fully bend your knees to bring you all the way forward to the “catch” position. Then drive your legs straight and pull your arms to your chest to complete a full stroke. Repeat for 30 seconds.

WORKOUT

Full strokes

Slowly row full strokes for 1 minute focusing on form. Aim for a ratio of 1:2, meaning the drive takes you one second and the recovery takes two. A slow and controlled recovery is KEY to this workout.

Power and Strength Pyramid

Once you feel good with the stroke, begin driving hard and strong out of the catch position with your legs. To develop the feeling of true power, keep your stroke rate (i.e. how many strokes you take per minute) under 24—the machine should track your stroke rate for you, so don’t worry about counting. For this segment, you’ll alternate between rowing with strong pressure and rowing with medium pressure. You’ll know you’re doing it correctly if your split time is at least 30 seconds longer when using medium pressure. (The machine should also display your split time.)

For instance, take a look at the first set of strokes below: 10 strokes using strong pressure followed by 10 strokes using medium pressure. Keeping your stroke rate under 24, let’s say it takes you two minutes to do 10 strong strokes. When you switch to medium pressure (continuing to keep your stroke rate under 24), it should take you at least two minutes and 30 seconds to complete the next 10 strokes using medium pressure. Because you’re driving with less power, it will take you longer to complete those strokes.

Again, a slow and controlled recovery is key. Try to maintain the 1:2 ratio on the drive to recovery.

10 strokes strong pressure – 10 strokes medium pressure

15 strokes strong pressure – 15 strokes medium pressure

20 strokes strong pressure – 20 strokes medium pressure

15 strokes strong pressure – 15 strokes medium pressure

10 strokes strong pressure – 10 strokes medium pressure

Timed Endurance Pyramid

For this pyramid, you want your split time to be super short when using strong pressure and at least 45 seconds longer when using light pressure, as you'll need the rest and recovery.

30 seconds strong pressure – 30 seconds light pressure

60 seconds strong pressure – 30 seconds light pressure

90 seconds strong pressure – 30 seconds light pressure

60 seconds strong pressure – 30 seconds light pressure

30 seconds strong pressure – 30 seconds light pressure

Max Meters

Row at whatever stroke rate you want for this piece, but keep it under 30 strokes-per-minute. The goal is to row the highest number of meters as possible in four minutes—that means you'll be going all out. If you can, try to maintain your split time through the entire four minutes, not allowing it to creep up. Find a rhythm and consistency within your stroke to help maintain your physical and mental strength.

Cool Down Row

Row for 1 minute at a slow pace

Stretch

Spend 2 minutes stretching your hamstrings, glutes, quads, abdominals, arms, and back. Yoga poses are also very helpful to stretch out the abs and back of the body, which just got a lot of action in this workout.

This article is not intended to substitute for informed medical advice. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or condition. Always check with your doctor before changing your diet, altering your sleep habits, taking supplements, or starting a new fitness routine.

Amy Schlinger

Amy Schlinger is a New York City-based health and fitness writer whose work has appeared in *Cosmopolitan*, *Health*, *Pilates Style*, *Self*, and *Shape*. She is an avid CrossFitter with a serious love for mashed potatoes.

