

# Cross-Training by Rowing

Despite the inspirational words of our 10 and 20 Million Meter Club members, many of us don't want to row indoors every day all year long. We like to take part in other sports for variety. We like to get outdoors when possible. Our exercise of choice changes with the seasons. We cross-train for competition in another sport. In reality, almost all of us cross-train at one time or another - if not for another sport, we do it for living.

What is the best way to use rowing as cross-training for other sports and activities? What is the best way to handle variety in one's athletic menu and training schedule while still getting the most out of the Indoor Rower? What minimum amount of rowing will keep one in rowing shape during peak season in another sport?

Whether you are a casual athlete or a serious competitor, this page will try to answer some of these questions for you. The less serious athlete can ignore the charts but take the general guidelines to heart. For the serious athlete, this article offers a framework upon which to build an annual training program.

Your program will vary depending on the nature and yearly cycle of your major sport.

## General Guidelines for Cross-training

The number and nature of cross-training workouts you add to your training program will depend on a number of factors. These include:

**Your training history:** If you are just getting back into running after being out of shape for a while, you may find that your legs and feet aren't ready to run every day. At the same time, you know that your aerobic capacity needs all the help it can get. Cross-training is the perfect solution.

**Your tendency toward injury:** If you are injured, or have recently been injured, cross-training can be extremely helpful to you. The right activity will allow you to maintain your cardiovascular capacity while easing or removing the load on the injured parts.

**Your need for variety:** This depends on your personal preference. If your primary sport ever starts feeling old, a little cross-training can bring back the fire.

**Your relative strengths/weaknesses:** If your weakness is cardiovascular conditioning, cross-training can be a great way to strengthen your system without overdoing it on the specific muscles used in your sport.

**The time in your training year relative to racing season.** Some athletes find cross-training most valuable when they are furthest from their competitive season; others use it right up to competition.



**Travis Pastrana, X Games Athlete, Freestyle Motocross, Rally Car Driver training on the Indoor Rower Model E**

Travis Pastrana has been recognized as one of the most fit athletes in competition today. Not just in the world of motor sports but all sports. Travis is lucky to have a state of the art workout facility in his home where he has two Model E's prominently displayed in the middle of the room. Concept2 employee Greg Hammond was lucky enough to be invited to Davidsonville, MD to freestyle legend Travis Pastrana's house to deliver his second Model E. Travis's father Robert is as amazing as Travis he loves competition and the first thing he asked was "show me the wireless race feature ". This led to a great race between Greg and Robert which quickly showed how seriously the whole family takes its training. Concept2 has become more aware of some of the action/motor sports athletes of today who recognize the amazing workout that can be achieved with the rower. For more information on how the rower is being used for these athletes contact Greg Hammond at [greg@concept2.com](mailto:greg@concept2.com) . Everyone at Concept2 thanks the Pastrana family for our invitation and you can keep an eye out for Travis racing for the Vermont Sports Car Team Subaru on the World Rally Circuit.

## Cross-training workouts you can try

**WORKOUT FREQUENCY:** 2-4 times per week in your "off-season," 1-2 times per week in active season.

**DURATION:** 30-60 minutes; shorter for intense, speed workouts; longer for steady state, aerobic workouts.

**WORK TYPE & INTENSITY:** Include steady state, anaerobic threshold work, as well as more intense intervals and racing pieces.

### SAMPLE WORKOUTS:

40 minute row (or 10,000 meters)  
1 minute hard, 1 minute easy for 40 minutes  
1-2-3-4-3-2-1 minute pyramid, 30 seconds off between pieces  
3 minutes @ 18SPM, 2 minutes @ 24SPM 1 minute @ 28SPM; for 30-60 minutes

Workout of the Day

# Why Cross-Train with Rowing?

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We have heard from our customers that rowing has improved their performance in a wide range of other sports, including running, biking, canoeing, tennis, lifeboat racing, and others.

## **What is it about Rowing that makes it such a good cross-training tool for such a variety of sports?**

Rowing exercises many muscle groups - providing an alternate way to exercise and strengthen the muscles used in other sports, as well as strengthening the muscles which complement those used in other sports. This is important because it maintains balance - so the specific sport muscles don't become relatively too much stronger than the opposing muscles, which can sometimes lead to injury.

Rowing exercises both upper and lower body - for sports like running and cycling that stress just the lower body, rowing offers upper body conditioning as well.

Rowing is non-impact exercise - thus imposing less impact-related wear and tear on the body. This is especially important for high impact sports like running, but is a nice feature no matter what your primary sport.

Rowing puts many of your major muscles through a wide range of motion, quite possibly wider than your primary sport. This can improve your flexibility.

Rowing can be done indoors anytime - which is especially nice for sports that may be affected by weather conditions, i.e. skiers in the summer, paddlers & cyclists in the winter.

Rowing is a superb conditioning tool for any level athlete - the cardiovascular workout offered on the Indoor Rower has been a training tool of Olympic rowers since the Rower was invented in 1981, so it should be enough for anyone. At the same time, because the work is self-paced, athletes of all abilities can also find just the work level that they need.

Rowing on the Concept2 Indoor Rower provides a means for accurately monitoring your level of conditioning, as well as constant feedback during your rowing workouts. (Let us know of any other reasons you would add to this list.)

# Develop a Cross-Training Plan

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The sections below describe some steps you can take toward developing a cross-training plan for yourself.

## **Establishing Your Annual Training Calendar.**

Think about your sports year. Make a list of the sports in which you compete or participate and define the "Active" or competitive season(s) for each one. You may have one or more sports, and one or more competitive seasons for each one.

Now define your "Training" season. You can do this by backing up 3 months from the active season to determine when your major training should be taking place. If you know from experience that you need a longer or shorter Training season, adjust accordingly. Do this for each sport.

Next define what we'll call "Groundwork". This is the general conditioning and prep work that gives you a solid base on which to build your focused training. Back up another 5 months or so for this.

The rest of the year for each sport will be called "Recovery".

Make yourself a training calendar like that shown below. Transfer the "Active", "Training", "Groundwork" and "Recovery" seasons for all your sports to this calendar. Don't worry about overlaps....

## **Training in Each Phase**

### **Groundwork**

Emphasize longer, steadier work, adjusting muscles to the exercise. The goal is to develop a good base of general cardiovascular conditioning, as well as to adjust your muscles to the specific motions of your sport. Cross-training can help a lot with the former, but not as much with the latter. Include plenty of stretching and flexibility work as well as strengthening exercises.

### **Training**

Here, your workouts should be tailored to best prepare you for the distance and intensity of your upcoming events. In general, you will need to train some at your race pace to develop a sense of pace for your competition. You will also want to include shorter harder work to push your intensity level up, as well as longer, easier work to maintain and improve your endurance. All of this will depend on your specific sport and events. Cross-training can be used for some of this training, but certainly not all of it.

### **Active/Racing**

During your active season, you will want to keep sharp and rested. Between events, it is important to give your body a chance to recover. Your work load can be greater if your events are fewer and further apart; less if they are close together. Cross-training can be a very welcome way to get a workout while still allowing your racing muscles to recover.

### **Recovery**

Variety, fun, whatever pace feels right. Lots of stretching. Keep in contact with the sport by doing a few steady state workouts at a comfortable pace. Do as much cross-training as you like - this is a great time for variety and trying new activities.

# Single-Sport, Multiple-Season Training Calendar

Perhaps you have just one sport, but several distinct competitive periods spread throughout the year. For example, you might run the Boston marathon in April, then another major race in the fall. Your annual training calendar would look like this:

MONTH	PHASE	ACTIVITY
January	Training	Running
February		
March		
April	<b>Active</b>	
May	Recovery	
June	Training	
July		
August		
September	<b>Active</b>	
October	Recovery	
November	Groundwork	
December		

# Single-Sport, Single-Season Training Calendar

Here's an example of an annual training calendar for a single competitive sport with a single racing season which extends from April through June.

MONTH	PHASE	ACTIVITY
January	Training	Running
February		
March		
April	<b>Active</b>	
May		
June		
July	Recovery	
August	Groundwork	
September		
October		
November		
December		

# Multi-Sport, Multi-Season Training Calendar

Here's an example of a multi-sport annual training calendar. This one includes an on-water rowing season in the fall; x-c ski races through the winter, and a marathon and various shorter runs from May to July. The active seasons are fairly well spread out, but there's a lot of overlap between the training, groundwork and recovery phases for the different sports. In effect, they all become cross-training for each other, with rowing being the thread that continues throughout the year and ties them all together.

MONTH	ROWING PHASE	RUNNING PHASE	XC SKIING PHASE	
January			<b>Active</b>	
February	Groundwork	Training		Recovery
March				
April				
May				
June		<b>Active</b>	Recovery	Groundwork
July				
August	Training			
September	<b>Active</b>	Groundwork	Training	
October				
November				
December	Recovery			