INJURY PREVENTION

Marin Rowing would like to keep track of the incidents/injuries that may occur both on the water and off so that we can work to minimize them. Please fill out an Injury Report Form and return to the Director. Thanks!

The sport of rowing inherently places great stresses on the entire body and being conditioned to such stresses can mean the difference between rowing all season or simply recovering on the injured list. Conditioning for the rowing movement is essential for injury prevention, maintenance of fitness level and peak performance in competition.

In regards to rowing performance and injury prevention, core/spine strength is optimal. This equates to coordinated (balanced) muscle contraction and the ability of the spine to retain its original shape under increasing loads. Spine stability is paramount in rowing.

There are 3 factors that increase the possibility of injury: muscle imbalance and/or weakness, inflexibility in hips, hamstrings and lower back and improper technique.

Muscle weakness, imbalance and spine stability can be overcome through core exercises and body awareness.

Inflexibly can be overcome through responsible stretching and flexibility exercises. Yoga, Pilates and Dynamic Stretching are all ways to increase flexibility. Inflexible hamstrings, hips and lower back directly impact back injuries and should be performed as an individual or group before and or following each practice session. Flexibility will increase your ability to prevent injury.

Improper Technique causes undesired strain on the lower back, hip flexors, knees and wrists. Over gripping the oars can create tendinitis in the wrists as an overuse injury, collapsing and lifting/twisting off of the catch will but a load on the lower back, as will pressing off of one leg more than the other, and pulling yourself up the slide will irritate the hip flexor muscles and in turn the lower back. The MRA is an outstanding technical training facility with mirrors, immediate video feedback, ergs with bars to teach the proper sequencing of the stroke and dock boxes. The coaching staff is here to help you and I highly recommend that you set a time away from scheduled practice time to work with your coach on land. Making changes is easier on land than on the water.

Injury Prevention and Protocol

Injury Prevention for Athletes:

1. Stop when you feel that you may have an injury and tell your coach immediately.
2. Always warm-up prior to start of practice.
3. Stretch. See stretching exercises.
    1. Hamstring inflexibility is a major cause of back strain and injury in rowing.
    2. Post work-out stretching is ideal and generates better results.
    3. Strengthen your abs and back. See core strengthening exercises.
    4. Use care when lifting the equipment – do not use your back to lift.
    5. Use proper technique on the erg and on the water.
    6. Erg well before you erg hard. Most injuries to the back are caused by improper erging under too much load for too long. Keep drag factor low (80) with novices. Use the ergs, mirrors and gamut erg as technique learning tools.

Injury Protocol for Coaches and Athletes

This Protocol is a guide for you as soon as you become aware of an injury to an athlete. Rest time and recovery will vary depending on the level of injury or soreness. Always err on the side of safety. Keep an injury log of your athletes. Keep track of what happened, when and how.

1. Do not ignore the problem or the athlete. Assume he/she is telling the truth and listen to what they are feeling.
2. Discontinue athlete training for the day. If they are on the water send them in without the injured athlete rowing.
3. Give them a few days to rest and recover. They can do work that does not use the injury.
4. Stay in touch with the athlete (and parents if a junior rower).
5. Suggest they see a PT for an evaluation.
6. On the recommendation of the parent, attending physician, or PT, the athlete can return to rowing.
7. Start slowly back into the program. Light erg the first day and use the slider ergs for less impact and load on the lower back.