



Q & A for Novice Rowers

Joining the club...What's in it for me? Rowing is a lifelong sport; it is low impact and provides great conditioning. MRC offers terrific opportunities to row just for fun and fitness, to race at the national level, and a little bit of everything in between. Whether you are looking for competition or camaraderie, MRC is committed to giving you skills and resources to realize your goals through rowing.

Who are the novices? Novices are first-year rowers. As a group you'll row together and learn the sport, which will include boat moving and storage, safety, terminology (what's a saxboard, anyhow?), club rules, and the basic strokes. You'll build some muscle, and you'll get some blisters. By fall, you'll race.

What does MRC do with my Program Fee? The fees allow MRC to provide quality coaching, motorboats, safety equipment, training, gas, administration, and the acquisition and care of the club's \$350,000 fleet of elite and recreational boats.

Is rowing safe? It is as long as you follow the rules, and we're sticklers for safety rules. Our coaches receive safety training, and our launches have USRowing and Coast Guard mandated safety equipment in them. We also have firm policies on cold, low light, and river flow conditions. For regular updates, go to the River Conditions page on the website.

Looking into my crystal ball, rowing after my novice year looks hazy. Help! After your novice year, you move together as a group onto the Green Team for your second year. You are introduced to sculling technique in addition to sweep rowing and continue to build endurance. After your second year, you can choose to row with one of the competitive teams or the Recreational Team. Each team has different expectations and training goals to allow you to find a place that best fits you. Given the importance of fitness, MRC members will also organize XC ski groups and other member training groups for winter conditioning.

I'm a trainer and racer. I bet I could be good at this! Ok, hot shot, go for it! Competitive rowing is one of the most physically demanding of all sports. Not only is the energy demand great, but every mistake a rower makes will be repeated 30+ times a minute in a race, so the stroke must be learned correctly. Be patient; it takes a while (years) to master our sport, but in our club with scores of national medalists, you have a lot of great rowers to model yourself after.

Did you say that rowing takes years to master? We have top rowers who are still perfecting their form after 20 years, which is why getting off on the right foot is so important. But as my old Pappy used to say, there's little that succeeds better than hard work...except private lessons. MRC coaches are available, see the website.

Who is Jen Sowins? Jen is our Club Administrator. In addition to your coaches and team captains, she is a great resource for any questions, comments, or concerns. Just like many of you, she started rowing through MRC's Learn to Row program to Novice, to Green, and now rows with the Women's Competitive Team. A West Coast transplant who landed in the Twin Cities in 2014, she thought she was looking for a physical challenge and opportunities to continue competing. Even better, she also found her people here in the rowing community at MRC.

So how much does all this stuff cost?

A good, used single costs between \$3000 and \$6000. They are \$7000 - \$12,000 new.

A new pair of sculling oars is \$550.

And those big eights? \$35,000 - \$52,000!

These numbers are generally for some of the top North American and European boat manufacturers. Chinese equipment can be as much as 30% cheaper.



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How do I sign up for Novice workouts? Once a club member and registered for the Novice Team, you'll be invited to join the novice group on SignupGenius.com, our tool of choice.

Who will be our coach? We have great USRowing certified coaches, and you can read their bio on our website under the Coaches Corner page.

I am a self-starter and want to work out on the rowing machines in the boathouse. Is that OK? We don't recommend it for the first few weeks because we want your rowing technique to settle in a bit. But after that? Go for it. FYI, the boathouse is locked outside of regular practice times. Check the program schedule that lists all of MRC's teams to determine when others are at the boathouse, typically 5:30-10:00 am and 5:00-7:30 pm.

What is Safesport? MRC is a member club of the USRowing Association (USRA), the national governing body for rowing in the United States. They insure us, and we race in their regattas. The USRA is part of the U.S. Olympic Committee's SafeSport program, which seeks to create a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all participants.

I can just row and do nothing to help the club, right? Negative, Ghost rider. In other words, no. MRC is volunteer led and predominately volunteer run. We need you! Because members volunteer their time for stuff like laundering the boat towels, weeding the garden, sweeping the boathouse, and serving on the board or other committees, MRC has more money to spend on the exciting stuff – BOATS!

Where can I find some resources on my own? A few websites.

- Row2k.com - classifieds, results, videos, shopping, special coverage of major events
- Worldrowing.com - Olympic and World Championship news and info
- USRowing.org - home of American rowing, articles on technique, safety, organization, regattas, Olympic Team, etc.
- Rowingillustrated.com - videos, chatrooms, opinion, and blogs
- Biorow.com - are you a rowing nerd? This place is for you, complete with formulas, charts, and graphs
- Concept2.com - home of the world's leading rowing machine, considered by many the gold standard ergometer, with training plans, logs, and world indoor records
- Craftsbury.com, FloridaRowingCenter.com, and CalmWatersRowing.net – a small sample of rowing schools. A number of our members take a rowing vacation (and this one time, at rowing camp . . .)
- DearNoviceRower.com – blog by a MRC member and 20+ year rower, her posts on “Your First Race!” are highly recommended