



## Boat Skills (Grip, Posture, Balance)

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The basic boat skills of grip, posture, and balance must be reviewed and consistently monitored to ensure athletes maintain a high level of competence in these three areas. Coaches should stop the workout if grip or posture errors become apparent to reduce the development of poor technique and prevent injury. The cause of balance inconsistencies must be identified, and coaching should address specific body positions or movements related to the errors.

### **Coaching:**

- **The grip** on the oar handles is one of the first lessons for new rowers, and it can be reviewed and practiced on-land before the on-water practice. The grip in sweep rowing must include hand spacing and the position of the fingers and thumbs. Coaches should review and discuss how the fingers hook on and pull the oar handles and the rotation movements at catch and release. The finger tension on the drive and the relaxation on the recovery must be emphasized.
- **Posture** includes the positions of the legs, torso, shoulders, arms, and head. Good posture is critical for developing effective rowing technique and minimizing injuries. The development of core strength will help athletes maintain good posture throughout the practice. The posture of the torso is critical, and coaches should ensure the lower back remains in a neutral spine position throughout the stroke. **Stop practice if posture deteriorates!**
- **Balance** is a learned skill, and coaches should consider starting each on-water practice with balance drills. Balance accomplished through good posture and relaxation allows for extended training and the development of good rowing technique. Athletes should automatically work on stationary balance drills when time allows during the workout (i.e., when waiting for other crews to group up).

### **Drills:**

#### **Grip**

- On-land grip review.
- Hand/wrist rotation drills.
- One hand on oar drills.
- Piano fingers on recovery.
- Feather-square-feather-square on recovery.

#### **Posture**

- Pause drills, (one; at finish), (two; ¼ slide, torso perp., arms bent), (three; half slide, body slightly forward, arms bent).
- Pause drills in combination.
- Cut-the-cake.

#### **Balance**

- Stationary balance drills (i.e. blades up,
- Stationary blade dips.
- Stationary catch (roll-ups) add a pause at half slide for advanced. Reset if balance falters on recovery.
- Balance emphasized during pause drills.
- Air strokes.
- Sky blades on recovery.