



# SAFETY INFORMATION

“Safety is Every Otter’s Responsibility.”



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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CLUB

The **London Otters Rowing Club** is the UK's LGBTQI+ inclusive rowing club. Our mission is to increase the profile of both competitive and recreational LGBTQI+ rowing within the sporting community.

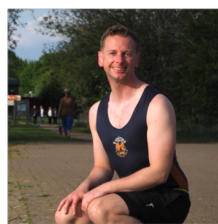
The London Otters Rowing Club is run by a committee elected by the club members. The 2022-2023 Committee are:



Chair:  
**Matt Davey** (he/him)  
chair@londonotters.org



Club Captain:  
**Jamie Johnstone** (he/him)  
captain@londonotters.org



Club Secretary:  
**Seán Kelleher** (he/him)  
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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:  
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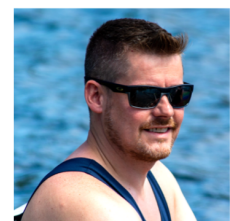
Health, Safety & Welfare:  
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Treasurer:  
**Alex Jones** (he/him)  
treasurer@londonotters.org

- > For all matters relating to **Health & Safety**, please email: [safety@londonotters.org](mailto:safety@londonotters.org)
- > If you would like to discuss any issues affecting you in the club, or express concerns about a peer, please use this form <https://www.londonotters.org/concerns> or email: [welfare@londonotters.org](mailto:welfare@londonotters.org)

## 2. SAFETY INFORMATION

- **Responsibilities and expectations for everyone:**

Members must always:

- Consider safety when deciding whether to start, or continue, an activity.
- Check their boats before going afloat.
- Take care when handling boats.
- Follow the instructions of their cox and coach.
- Take care when launching.
- Dress appropriately for the conditions.
- Always abide by the circulation plan or rules of the dock/river.
- Keep a good lookout.
- Report all the incidents that they see.
- Take care when coming ashore.
- Clean their boats before putting them away.

- **Safety Aids:**

LORC life jackets and a first aid kit are located in the Club's container.  
First aid kit and defibrillator are also available from the Regatta Centre reception.

- **Emergency Contacts – to be used for genuine emergencies only, by captain/coach/cox as priority:**

- **London Regatta Centre (first aid / launch rescue) - [02075112211](tel:02075112211)**
- Airport Rapid Rescue - [02076460111](tel:02076460111) - only as **last resort**, if LRC fails.
- Emergency Services - 999 / Local A&E (Newham) [02074764000](tel:02074764000)

**All members** should have these numbers in their phone contacts.

**Always report any safety incident / near miss via the **Incident report form** on TeamApp, or at: [www.londonotters.org/incident](http://www.londonotters.org/incident)**

## 3. EMERGENCY FIRST AID

The members listed below are first aid trained, and one of these people should be requested to give assistance in the first instance:

First Name	Last Name	Squad
Fred	Arce-Vargas	Senior
Arunan	Jothieswaran	Senior
Lorraine	Carter	Senior
Mandy	Johnstone	Novice
Michael	Hilland	Cox Squad
Jonathon	Marx	Social
Grant	Ralph	Social
Tom	Connolly	Social
Dave	Frost	Social

# 4. NAVIGATION AT THE DOCKS

- **Club rules:**

In order to boat with LORC, you must be:

- in good health or have informed the club of any existing medical conditions that rowing might aggravate
- able to swim 100m in light clothing
- able to tread water for 2 minutes
- able to swim underwater for 5m.

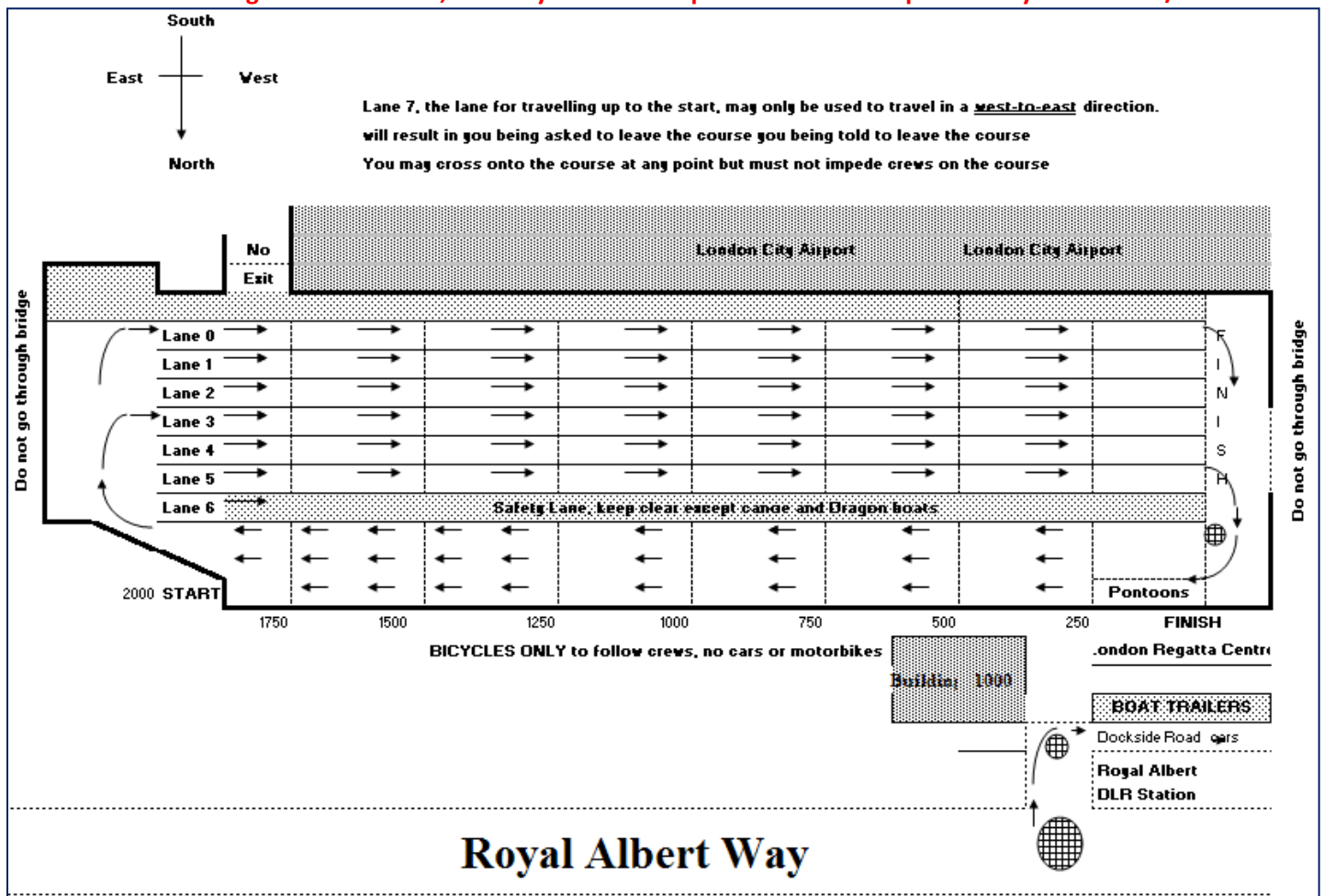
- **Outing rules:**

- NO crew or single sculler may boat unaccompanied (there must be at least two boats on the water or one boat and one person on the bank). These 2 boats or boat & bank rider must stay within sight of each other.
- If the captain/coach believes there is a risk of a boat capsizing, boats may be restricted to a specific distance (e.g: 500 / 1000m) and must be accompanied at all times.
- **Recommendation:** All coxes, steers and single scullers *should* carry a mobile phone with all emergency numbers in a waterproof container attached to their person.

Boating is subject to the following restrictions:

- ⇒ Light *sunrise to sunset* ⇒ Visibility *500m minimum*
- ⇒ Wind *17mph max* ⇒ Water conditions *no white horses*
- ⇒ *No lightning*

- **Circulation plan and navigation rules:** **All boats must comply with the circulation pattern set out by the LRC. When crossing onto the course, ensure you do not impede other crews - particularly at the Start/Finish lines**



**Both our club and the Royal Docks take the rules of navigation very seriously: breaching them not only endangers yourself and others but could result in a blanket ban on the whole club from using the dock. In the case of a severe breach of the rules of navigation, it may be necessary for us to suspend the individual responsible from on-water activities for a period.**

## 5. EQUIPMENT

- In order to remain safe on the water, it is important to check that the equipment is in good condition each time it is used. Boats should be checked each time before/after they go afloat.

**Do not assume that everything is OK, check it for yourself.**

A thorough boat and equipment check includes the following:

- No visible signs of damage to the hull, for example scrapes or cracks.
- Buoyancy compartments, seals, hatch covers, boat hull and ventilation bungs are secure and watertight. Buoyancy Bags should be installed if no under seat buoyancy compartments are fitted.
- Bow ball is in good condition and securely fixed (Some boats may not need bow balls if their bow is not pointed or they are made from a soft material. This is specified in the 2016 rules of racing).
- Riggers, swivels, gates, seats, runners and stretchers are secure and operating correctly.
- Blades are undamaged and buttons are secure and properly set.
- Fixing screws or bolts do not represent a hazard in the event of an accident.
- Heel restraints are strong, secure and durable and the correct length. They must be properly adjusted (each heel shall be restrained to prevent it from rising higher than 7cm measured at right angles, from the footplate).
- Rudder lines, steering mechanisms and rudder (where fitted) and fin, are secure and in working order.
- The boat is suitable for the situation in which it is to be used, for example maximum crew weight.
- Lighting, if required, is suitable for the outing and working correctly.
- The speaker system, if applicable, is working correctly.

Any boat or equipment that is found not to be satisfactory must be reported to the Equipment officer (and/or coach/captain). Anything broken which cannot be fixed on the day **MUST** be reported online:

[www.londonotters.org/equipment](http://www.londonotters.org/equipment)

## 6. HAZARDS

Accidents do (and will) happen, but working to make these rarer and less serious results in **everyone having a better time**. For your safety and that of others, please read the following carefully:

- Protect yourself against the elements: wear a suitable rowing kit, with close fitting garments:



- Food & drink: Ensure you have eaten sufficiently before you exercise and if the outing is longer than an hour take a bottle of appropriate drink with you.

- **Capsizing:**

**If you capsize:**

- Stay calm and breathe deeply. *(The impact of cold shock can be dramatic and it is important not to panic.)*
- Stay with the boat at all times. *(Your ability to swim is reduced in cold water. The boat can act as a life raft.)*



⇒ If possible attempt to right the boat *(This makes the recovery of the boat easier):*

- Arrange the oars parallel to the boat
- Place yourself along the length of the boat, reach over the hull of the boat and take hold of a rigger on the other side.
- Pull the rigger towards you whilst simultaneously standing on the rigger on your side of the boat.
- As the boat rights itself take care to avoid the oar in the gate by staying close to the hull.
- Get out of the water and on top of the boat as quickly as possible.
- Raise the alarm.
- Either, try and paddle the boat towards the pontoon keeping as much of your body out of the water as possible (this is only practical if you are close to the pontoon) or wait to be towed back to the pontoon.
- Once you are out of the water, you must get warm and dry as quickly as possible. Space blankets are available in the Otters first aid kit.

**NB: Capsizes must be reported on the day to the Safety Officer and/or Reception by the Crew.**

**If you see a boat capsize from the dock side:**

- Stop what you are doing.
- Assess the situation and raise the alarm.
- *Either* direct another nearby crew to help if it is able to do so *or* call the LRC to ask for a launch rescue.
- Ensure space blankets are ready at the pontoon.

**If you see a boat capsize whilst afloat:**

- Stop what you are doing.
- Assess the situation and raise the alarm.
- *Either* go and assist *or* direct another nearby crew to help if it is in better position to do so *or* call the LRC to ask for a launch rescue. **(RDA Reception - 02075112211).**



All LORC members should watch the **British Rowing's Capsize and Recovery video** - <https://tinyurl.com/BRcapsize>

You can also watch the **London Otters' latest Capsize & Recovery session video**: <https://tinyurl.com/LORCCapsize>

# 7. STRETCHES FOR WARM UP + COOL DOWN



## STRETCH ESSENTIALS

**1 COMPOUND STRETCH**  
Hands on wall at hip height. Walk feet back to under hips. Tilt pelvis forward, knees back, strong arms.



**2 HIP FLEXOR STRETCH**  
Tuck tail bone under. Press hips forward. Stretch fingertips to sky.



**3 HAMSTRINGS STRETCH**  
Band around heels. Pull arms to pivot from hips. Move body forwards.



**4 COMPOUND STRETCH**  
Band around heel. Reach up over head, thread opposite arm through.



**5 UPPER BACK MOBILITY**  
Move hand along arm, across chest and reach back. Look to hand - hold 2 sec. Repeat x 5, then hold stretch.



**6 LOWER BACK STRETCH**  
Lie on belly with hands in push up position. Gently raise body from ground, relax. Stop if lower back discomfort occurs.



**7 GLUTES STRETCH**  
Place heel in front of groin. Stretch leg back. Lower body weight onto elbows.



**8 SHORT QUADS STRETCH**  
Place big toes together. Sit between heels. Sit tall.



**9 CALF STRETCH**  
Place foot flat and close to bottom. Press through knee, keep heel on ground



**10 NECK STRETCH**  
Sit with chest tall. Gently move ear to shoulder.



**OR**  
Pivot pelvis forward. Keep chest high. Relax foot.



**OR**  
Hold ankle with opposite hand. Keep knee in line with shoulder. Move lower leg towards chest.



**STRETCH**  
WHEN BODY IS WARM  
HOLD 30 SECONDS MINIMUM  
HOLD 2 MINUTES MAXIMUM  
EACH SIDE

**AFTER EXERCISE**  
ESPECIALLY AFTER  
ROW or ERG

**A.**



**B.**



**C.**

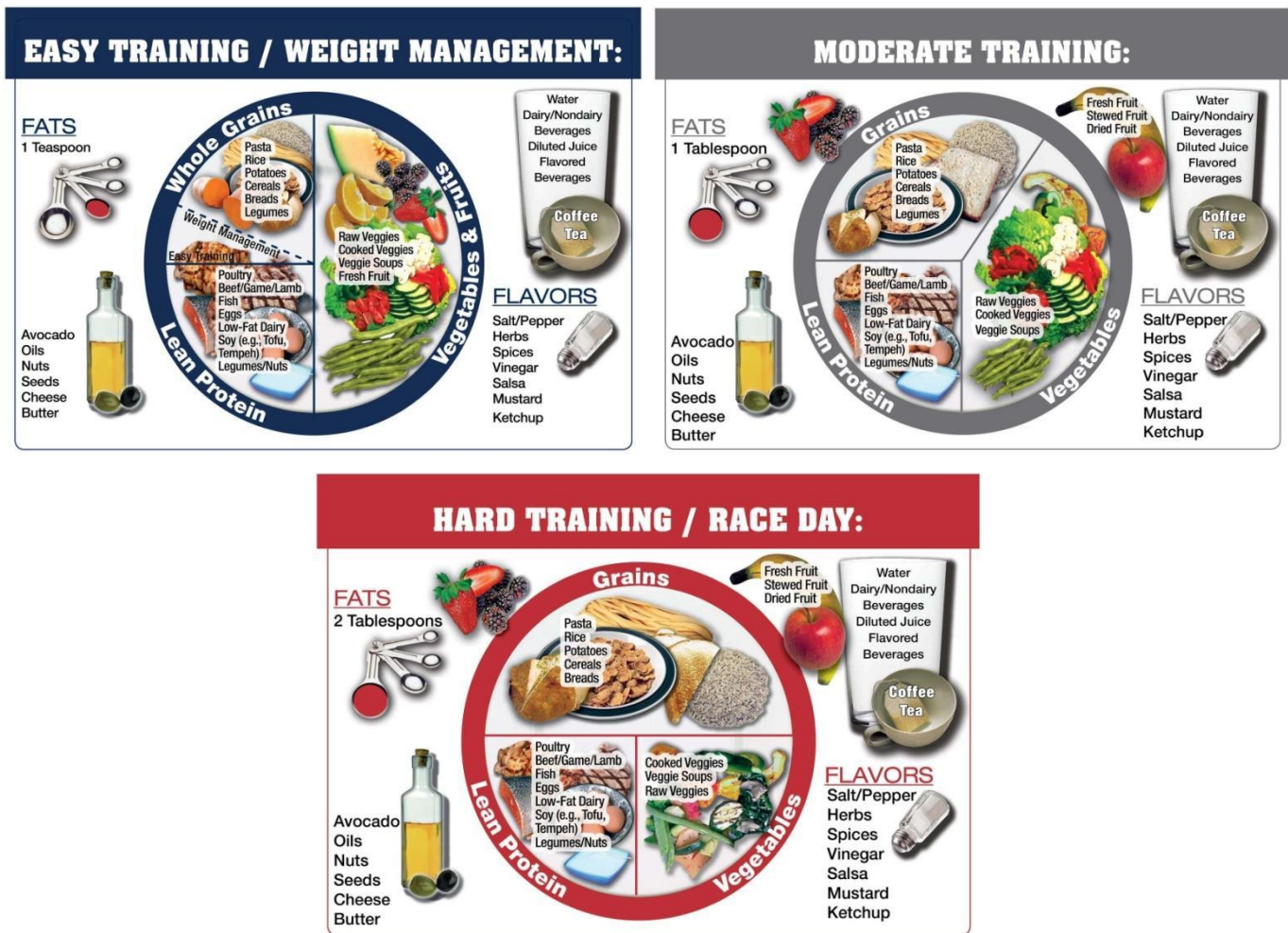


# 8. NUTRITION

Nutrition is probably the area which can have the most immediate impact on an athlete's performance. Food is your body's fuel and not having enough, not having the right kind, or not at the right time will impair your race performance and your training.

**Breakfast:** After an overnight fast, it's important to top up glycogen stores with a breakfast containing carbohydrate to fuel your early morning training session. Try to allow approximately 45-60 minutes after eating before training so you don't feel too uncomfortable during the session. For breakfast on the run you can prepare bircher muesli or smoothies the night before and take them with you. Homemade bars or bought bars such as Nakd, Rude Health, Eat Natural, Nature Valley Granola, Food Doctor, Trek bars can also be useful on-the-go snacks. However be wary of any bars with added powdered protein as it may not be batch tested - If in doubt ASK your club's Clean Sport Advocate and check the [www.informed-sport.com](http://www.informed-sport.com) website.

**Other meals:** the following 'plates' give a few pointers as to the ratio of each food groups depending on the training need:



## Supplements

Supplements (anything from vitamins to protein shakes) can contain substances that are banned in rowing. Their contents are poorly regulated so you can never be totally sure what is in them. If in doubt, check <http://www.informed-sport.com/>. With a well-balanced diet, supplements should not be necessary unless you have underlying health problems. British Rowing advises athletes not to take supplements unless they are advised to by a doctor or nutritionist.

## Alcohol

Alcohol affects the body in many ways and some athletes avoid alcohol completely to avoid its negative effects. Alcohol can cause dehydration, disrupt sleep patterns, increase appetite and impair reaction time. Most effects will only be significant through consumption of large quantities of alcohol but, as with all nutritional choices, you should consider it carefully in your diet.

Further reading / Sources: <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Nutrition-Guide.pdf>, <https://www.rowperfect.co.uk/be-your-own-support-team-1-nutrition/>, <https://www.teamusa.org/nutrition>

## 9. EMERGENCY ON WATER

In the event of capsize, ill-health or equipment failure, the first priority is to rescue people from the water.

### ➤ If the Safety Launch is on the water

Most club sessions have the support of the Regatta Centre safety launch, and this should be used in the first instance to rescue casualties from the water as follows:

- Launch driver to assess the situation and prioritise rescue from the water – the launch can hold approximately 11 people as a floating platform.
- If more than one rescue trip is necessary, ensure adequate buoyancy is available for those waiting for launch to return.
- Ensure other dock users are aware of incident – it may be necessary to request a crew to perform a 'buddy rescue' (see below) if the launch is full.
- When all casualties are on dry-land, retrieve boats and blades. If possible, retrieve the equipment at the same time as casualties to remove the hazard, but not at the expense of the welfare of the casualties.

### ➤ If there is no Safety Launch on the water

If the launch is not out and there is a casualty in the water who cannot reach the pontoon or bank, the following procedures apply:

- Perform a 'buddy rescue', only from 8+, 4+/-/x. **Do NOT use a 1x or 2- to perform a 'buddy rescue'.**

Only very experienced crew in 2x should attempt a 'buddy rescue', but preferably call for a larger boat.

If the casualty cannot get onto the canvas of the rescue boat, carefully position the rescue boat next to the casualty and tow them to the pontoon.

## 10. NEAR-DROWNING

The goal is to safely rescue the victim and begin first aid.

In a near-drowning emergency, the sooner the rescue and first aid begin, the greater the victim's chance of survival. Do not endanger yourself in rescuing the victim during this process.

### ➤ First aid for a near-drowning victim:

- The focus of the first aid for a near-drowning victim in the water is to get oxygen into the lungs without aggravating any suspected neck injury.
- If the victim's breathing has stopped, give 5 mouth-to-mouth rescue breaths as soon as you safely can. This could mean starting the breathing process in the water.
- Once on shore, reassess the victim's breathing and circulation (heartbeat and pulse). If there is breathing and circulation without suspected spine injury, place the person in recovery position (lying on the stomach, arms extended at the shoulder level and bent, head on the side with the leg on the same side drawn up at a right angle to the torso) to keep the airway clear and to allow the swallowed water to drain. If there is no breathing, begin CPR. Continue CPR (30 chest compression followed by 2 rescue breaths) until help arrives or the person revives.
- Keep the person warm by removing wet clothing and covering with warm blankets to prevent hypothermia.
- Remain with the recovering person until emergency medical personnel have arrived.



## 11. HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia can range from mild through moderate to severe, and severe hypothermia requires urgent medical treatment in hospital. Hypothermia is defined as occurring when the body temperature drops below 35°C, but mild hypothermia can start at higher body temperatures. As the body temperature decreases further, shivering will stop completely, the heart rate will slow, and a person will gradually lose consciousness. The person may not appear to have a pulse or be breathing. Emergency assistance should be sought immediately.

### ➤ Dealing with mild hypothermia

- If individuals are cold or mildly hypothermic, **insulate and rewarm:**
  - Insulate to reduce heat loss
  - Wrap in extra layers of clothing to provide additional insulation
  - Use a hat to insulate their head
  - Move them to sheltered/warm environments (in a gig for example this could be lying down below the gunwales) or take ashore/to dry land to a warm building.
  - When in a warm environment, replace any wet clothing with layers of warm dry clothing.
  - Provide warm fluids but not hot or alcoholic
  - Constantly assess their condition and never leave them alone.
  - You could later immerse them in a lukewarm bath or shower, i.e. just above blood temperature.

Victims who are conscious, rational and capable of recounting their experiences, although shivering dramatically, generally require the removal of all wet clothes and replacement with dry clothes or blankets. Only remove and replace an individual's clothes once in a sheltered environment. If in cold, wet or windy conditions, don't remove clothing but wrap individuals in extra layers to reduce any further heat loss.

For a conscious casualty, hot, sweet drinks and rest in a warm environment not exceeding 22°C (normal room temperature) are also recommended. However, always bear in mind that even conscious victims can collapse and become unconscious shortly after rescue. They should, therefore, be laid down and should not be left alone. Until fully recovered, they should rest and avoid any activity. Remember, never give alcohol to people with hypothermia.

**Note:** If looking after a diabetic rower, take extra care of them in cold weather as diabetics cannot convert glucose to produce heat and energy as efficiently as non-diabetics.

### **In cases of severe hypothermia or if a rower is not responding to your treatment:**

1. Summon assistance immediately – call for an ambulance or transfer to a medical site for professional assistance. (Call 999/112 or place a mayday call to the Coastguards if you are at sea)
2. Assess - ABC (Airway, Breathing, Circulation); ensure their airway stays clear.
3. You will need to check the pulse for at least 60 seconds, as it may have become very slow in severe cases of hypothermia.
4. Basic Life Support should be given and continued until the patient can receive professional medical assistance.

This information is taken from the British Rowing Row Safe Guide, and Cold Water and Hypothermia Guide and can be accessed here:

1. <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-RowSafe.pdf>
2. <http://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/online-learning/safety/cold-water-and-hypothermia/>

# 12. REMINDER: WATER-BORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

## Beware of bugs, blooms and bio-hazards

### Responsibilities

#### Personal

- Follow the advice and training given by the club and coaches on the prevention of contact with potentially harmful diseases
- Adopt these measures as part of your routine before, during and after rowing
- Be aware of the symptoms of water-borne diseases and to know what action to take

#### Club

- Provide information on diseases most likely to be encountered by club members, either on their home water or when they visit other venues
- Display posters in appropriate places (Safety Notice Board, changing rooms, toilets etc) informing members of the dangers, avoidance, symptoms and treatment of water-borne diseases

#### Coach

- Make yourself aware of the diseases likely to be encountered on your home water or at other venues that club members may visit
- Include knowledge about the prevention and the symptoms of water-borne diseases as part of your training programmes
- Be aware of the potential dangers of contact with water-borne diseases, the immediate treatment of someone suspected of coming into contact with a possible contaminant, and the need to seek medical attention
- Be aware of measures to reduce the possibility of contact with potentially harmful diseases and train your crews in the routine use of such measures

Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink

#### Club Water Safety Adviser

- Make yourself aware of the diseases likely to be encountered on your home water or at other venues that club members may visit
- Be able to recognise the causes of water-borne diseases (eg algal blooms) and their symptoms
- Be aware of the treatment for someone who may contract such diseases
- Have knowledge of the preventative measures that should be used to avoid contamination and so reduce the likelihood of infection
- Advise the club in all of the above

## Further information

The water we row upon is not always as clean as we would choose and certainly is not pure enough to be swallowed without giving more than a passing thought to the possible effects it will have upon our internal systems. The ARA Guide to Safe Practice in Rowing has, as its primary aim, the prevention of accidents involving physical injury, damage to equipment and, at worst, drowning. However, there are other risks to health associated with water-based activities which arise from the microbiological, or chemical, quality of the water itself and of its immediate environs. The use of inland waters can never be risk free and it is essential that, as users, we are aware of the risks present.

## Water-borne diseases most likely to be encountered

### Weil's Disease - Leptospirosis

The risk of contracting Leptospirosis from recreational water is very small, however the serious nature of the disease is such that we must be aware of the dangers and should take simple precautions to reduce the risk of infection. Leptospirosis is an infection caught through contact with infected animal urine (mainly from rodents, cattle or pigs). The causal organism can enter the body via cuts or abrasions of the skin or, the lining of the nose, mouth, throat or eyes. If flu-like symptoms develop shortly after contact with the water (1-3 weeks) then your doctor should be contacted and advised of the circumstances of exposure.

### Blue-Green Algae - Cyanobacteria

Cyanobacteria are commonly found in fresh and brackish water during mid to late summer. Algal blooms can form during extended periods of warm, settled weather. The blooms may be flocculent or have a jelly or paint-like appearance and are normally blue-green in colour though red, brown or black forms can occur. Algal scums accumulate downwind on the surface of lakes and slow moving water. The majority of blooms produce allergens and/or toxins and have caused the death of animals, including sheep and dogs. In humans they can cause eye irritation, dermatitis and joint/muscle pain or, more seriously, gastro-enteritis, pneumonia, liver damage and certain neurological conditions.

### Gastro-intestinal illness

The use of inland water will never be risk free and it is essential that users are aware of the risks involved in using a particular stretch of water. Assessing the risks posed by water quality is difficult as conditions can vary substantially in a very short space of time. In general, the health risk will depend on the number and proximity of sewage effluent discharges in any particular body of water. There are currently no microbiological standards for recreational water and, at present, only the powers

## Minimum standards to be adopted

Information about water-borne diseases, prevention and symptoms should be provided to all members. Club members should be advised:

- Never drink water from a river or lake
- If contaminated water has been swallowed, refer to your doctor with full details of the incident
- Only drink from your own water bottle
- Always shower after contact with the water
- Wash hands thoroughly and shower if necessary before eating or drinking
- Do not throw your coxswain into the water
- Cover cuts and abrasions (including blisters) with waterproof dressings
- Wear suitable footwear when launching or retrieving a boat, particularly if it is necessary to wade into the water to prevent direct contact with the water and protect the feet from cuts and abrasions
- Avoid immersion in, or contact with, water, particularly if there is an algal scum or bloom
- Do not splash river or lake water onto your face or body in order to cool down (take a bottle of tap water with you for this)
- Hose down all equipment after outings to remove any potential contamination
- Keep oar handles clean particularly if contaminated with blood
- Wash, and thoroughly dry, any contaminated clothing before re-use
- Maintain your immunisation regime against Tetanus, also Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Polio, Typhoid and Dysentery when training abroad

## Further good practice

(In addition to minimum standards to be adopted)

Now wash your hands

#### Personal

- Avoid jumping into, or swimming in, rivers and lakes
- Don't submerge hands or legs over the side of the boat in order to cool down (take a bottle of tap water with you for this)
- Don't splash river or lake water onto a sticking slide or oar (take a bottle of tap water with you for this)
- Do minimise contact with water by wearing close fitting clothing

#### Club

- Supply alcohol wash bottles in the boathouse

provided under the Public Health Act 1936 - Section 259, to deal with 'any pond, ditch, gutter or water course which is so foul or in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance', provide us with protection. Many organisms causing gastro-intestinal illnesses (eg Salmonella) can be found in water contaminated with sewage and extra precautions should be taken when rowing on flood-water and water known, or suspected, to contain sewage.

### Hepatitis A

Hepatitis is caused by a virus present in faeces and is, therefore another condition that may be contracted from water contaminated with sewage. The onset of Hepatitis can be abrupt and symptoms include fever, jaundice and abdominal discomfort.

Other potential infections include Polio, Tetanus and Typhoid, though they are less likely to be found in British waters.

#### Other

- HSE Guidance on Leptosporosis



Row Safe: A Guide to Good Practice in Rowing. 2008-V1

- Further safety information can be found on the British Rowing website, including RowSafe & the Rules of Racing, see <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/safety/>