

## Seats, Floorboards and Footrests

The seats, floorboards and footrests affect the way the rower sits and therefore the ergonomics of the rowing experience. It pays to take care to make this as comfortable and natural as possible for people of all sizes because if people enjoy their experience they will come back for more.

### **Seats:**

The seat heights in the plans are about right, but most clubs pad the seats with some form of firm foam like yoga mats. This can adjust the height for each rower. Some clubs tilt the seat aft so that the aft edge does not dig in to the rower's thighs so much.

### **Floorboards:**

As was mentioned before, floorboards are in the plans and they strengthen the floor and take the wear. However they weigh a lot and many boats race without them. They make it easier to walk about in the boat and so are useful for beginners.

### **Footrests:**

These are essential in a serious rowing boat. They can be narrow bars but it is best to support the ball of the foot and most are also finding that having a footstrap over the widest part of the foot makes the rower feel more secure against falling over backwards.

Most footrests are now made to support the entire foot, and are angled at about 45 degrees to the horizontal. They can be timber or plywood. If you have decided to race without floorboards the footrests need to be fixed to the boat independently of the floorboards.

They need to be easily moved fore and aft to accommodate rowers with long and short legs. The longest legged rowers will need their feet right up against the frame of the seat facing them, i.e. aft of them. The shortest legged rowers will need the footrest at least a foot (300mm) nearer to them.

Most clubs have some sort of rack with notches or slots glued to the inside of the boat, into which the footrests slot. Some have made a T section track of a wooden batten topped with a wider ply strip, glued to the keelson. On this, a ply footrest assembly slides fore and aft. It is retained by a pin which engages in holes in the track.

Whatever system you use, it is helpful if the rower can't pull the footrest out by falling over backwards which sometimes happens when the oar digs in accidentally (known as "catching a crab").

The stroke footrest is in the very narrow extreme stern of the boat which makes fitting an adjustable footrest tricky. The rack or guides need to fit the hull or else attach to the keelson. Some clubs have glued a permanent footrest at the longest position and then use spacers to shorten the distance for other rowers.