

Programming Suggestions for Schools

These programming suggestions are based on the assumption that you have just two indoor rowers and more than two children, so one of your biggest challenges will be giving everyone a chance, and keeping everyone busy when they're not rowing.

Rotation Strategies:

- **Time:** Take your allotted program time and divide it roughly by the number of children you have in the group. For example, if you have one hour, two indoor rowers and 15 children, then each child gets a max of eight minutes of rowing. You can then decide if you want them to row non-stop, or split it into two or three different sittings. You can vary this from day to day. Be sure they record the number of meters they row each time for their logbook.
- **Number of Strokes:** For variety, you can allot rowing time by number of strokes. Set up multiple machines in a row, have kids row a certain number of strokes, then switch. Thirty strokes should take about a minute. Be sure they record the number of meters they row each time for their logbook.
- **Distance:** This strategy gives more time to the slower kids, because it takes them longer to cover the same distance. You might set any distance from 200 to 500 meters. Again, be sure they record the number of meters they row each time for their logbook!
- **Speedy Rotation:** Kids love this! Try having each child row for 30 seconds, or 100 meters, or 15 strokes—then switch. This really minimizes the down time for everyone! Assign kids to watch the Performance Monitor and record the number of meters as each child gets on and off. Then you'll have an opportunity for some math practice later as you calculate how far each child rowed.

Keeping Busy:

Other things that kids can be doing while it's not their turn to row:

- Record their meters in their logbook. If they are rowing several short bouts per day, they can spend some time doing the math of adding their meters up before entering them in their logbook.
- Stretching and other exercises. Create a number of exercise stations around the room. Put a sign labeling the exercise at each station, number them, and have the kids rotate whenever you call out—every minute perhaps.
- Plan a group “rowing” trip around/along a local body of water. Make a map with distance increments to post, and have the kids mark their progress along the route. When not rowing, kids can work on planning the trip, creating the map, and marking the progress.
- Do research on the sport of rowing. How many different kinds of boats are raced in the Olympics? When was the first Olympics in which women rowed? What is a “head race” and how did it get that name? What is the difference between sweep rowing and sculling? Work on a presentation for the rest of the school.

Find the right balance of fun and challenge for each kid. Some kids may have the patience for longer steady rows, but interval workouts may do a better job of keeping kids focused and interested.