

# A short description of the rowing stroke

AN EXTRACT FROM MY FORTHCOMING BOOK

# DRIVE 1



As the rower reaches this position at the end of the recovery the oar is placed in the water by lifting the hands, feel that the outside hand does this lift. At the same time the feet press on the footboard and the seat is driven away.

The rower should feel poised, ready to spring into the stroke. A good picture is of a cat ready to jump, relaxed, balanced but alert.

## Checkpoints:

Shins vertical.

Chest against thighs.

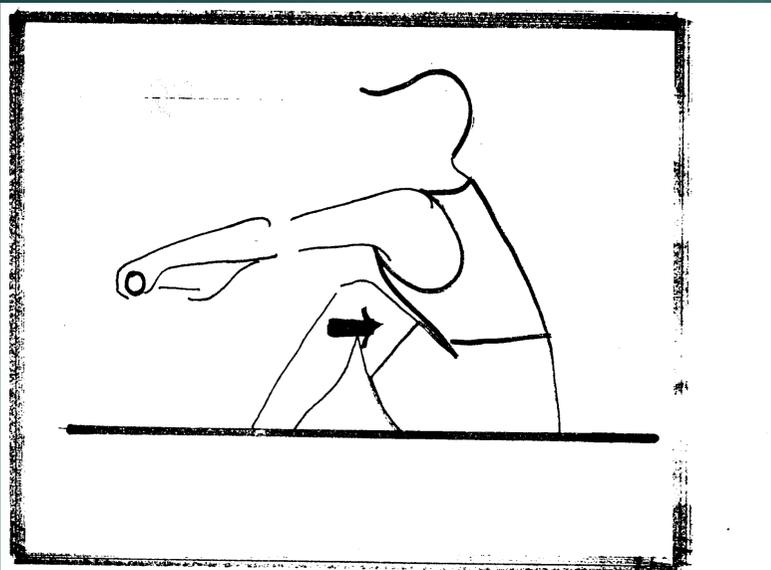
Lower back tall and strong, the hips must be rotated forward to achieve this.

Upper back loose and rounded.

Shoulders parallel to the oar and loose, head up.

Both hands on the handle, wrists flat.

# DRIVE 2



## DRIVE 2

*The START of the DRIVE: Back holds firm position.  
Hang off handle.  
Initial drive with LEGS only*

The first part of the drive is a legs only movement. The body hangs, is suspended, from the hands, arms and shoulders and only transfers the power of the legs. The legs push against the footboard and drive the seat toward the bow. The low back and stomach muscles have to hold firm to transfer the leg power to the upper body and handle.

The rower should feel that she / he is pushing against something fixed. The handle should move slowly at first and the feeling is of being light on the seat, suspended.

### Checkpoints:

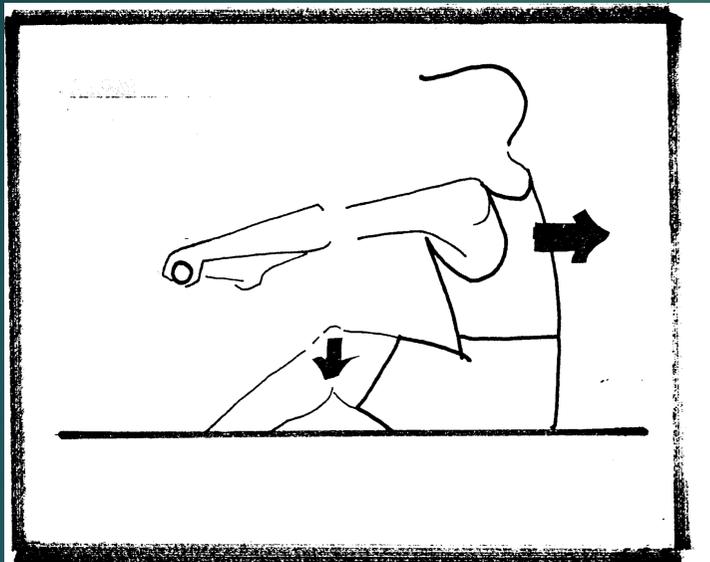
Hands, arms shoulders stay in the same position as at the catch.

Upper back still loose and rounded.

Lower back and stomach fixed and strong to hold the leg power.

Legs driving powerfully.

# DRIVE 3



## DRIVE 3

*Leg drive continues in one piece.  
Still hanging off handle.  
Upper body swings back to add acceleration to legs*

As the legs reach the middle of their range of movement the lower back begins to move. The powerful muscle groups of the buttocks and hamstrings swing the body towards the bow. This movement increases the acceleration of the handle, and thus the boat.

The rower should feel that the stroke is getting lighter, that the handle is starting to move more easily. He / she must still be suspended between the handle and the footboard.

### Checkpoints:

Legs still driving.

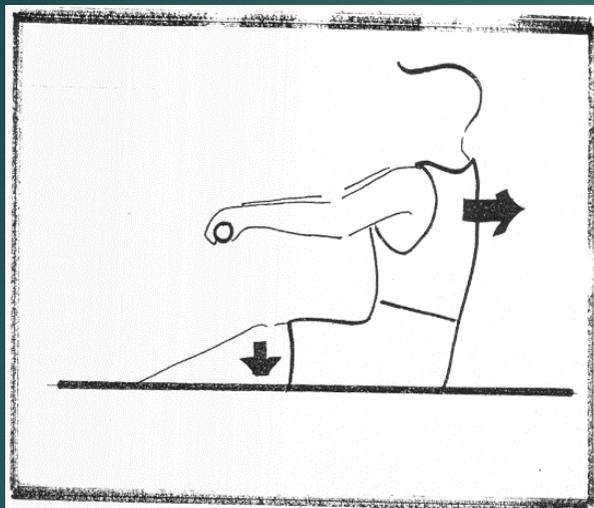
Lower back moves towards the bow.

Upper back still loose and naturally rounded.

Shoulders and arms still loose and just hanging.

The boat should be visibly accelerating by now.

# DRIVE 4



## DRIVE 4

*Still driving through stretcher.  
Shoulders squeeze back (move shoulder blades)*

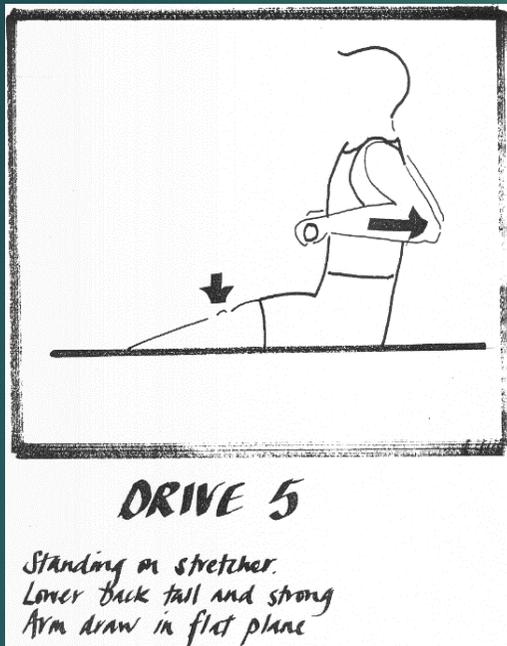
As the back moves through the vertical the shoulder muscles start to work. The shoulders are drawn back from the extended, hanging position using the big muscle groups of the upper back. After the shoulders have begun to draw the arms start to move and pull the handle to the body. The legs are still driving and the back swinging.

This is the most dynamic part of the stroke. The rower should feel powerful and feel that the handle is moving fast towards her / him.

### Checkpoints:

- Legs still driving.
- Lower back moves towards the bow.
- Shoulders opening.
- Rower still tall and in the middle of the boat.
- Boat accelerating more.

# DRIVE 5



In the finish position the legs are driven down against the slides, the body leans slightly toward the bow the shoulders and elbows are extended behind the chest. The handle should approach the body at the height of the 1<sup>st</sup> rib with the blade still firmly anchored in the water.

The rower should still feel suspended, as if she / he is trying to move the handle and the footboard further apart.

## Checkpoints:

Blade in the water.

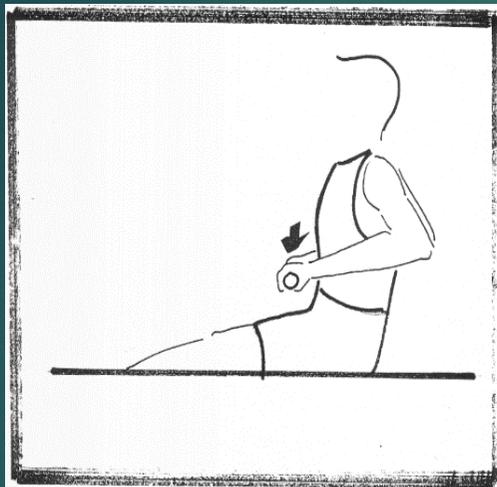
Handle, wrist, elbow at the same height.

Lower back tall and strong.

Sit in the middle of the boat.

Boat moving at it's fastest.

# RECOVERY 1



## RECOVERY 1

*Outside fingers tap down and away.  
Inside hand relaxes and feathers*

The first move in the recovery is to extract the blade from the water! This is done by tapping down on the handle with the outside hand. After the blade is out of the water the inside wrist and fingers turn the blade to the horizontal. During this movement the body stays still, tall but relaxed.

This part of the stroke must be smooth, the outside hand must move continuously around the turning point. The rower feels that the boat runs away after it is released.

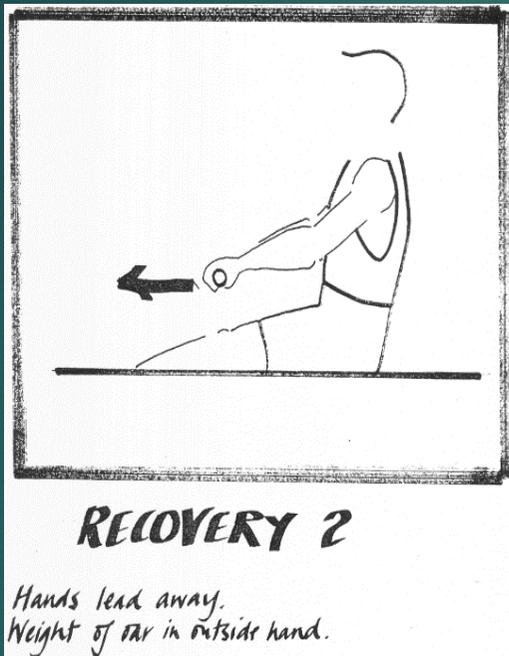
### Checkpoints:

Both hands on the handle.

Blade out of the water before it turns.

Only the inside hand turns.

# RECOVERY 2



The body stays still as the arms carry the handle away. The outside hand should have the weight of the oar.

The rower feels as if she / he sits for a long time at the finish. Sit there and let the boat glide away.

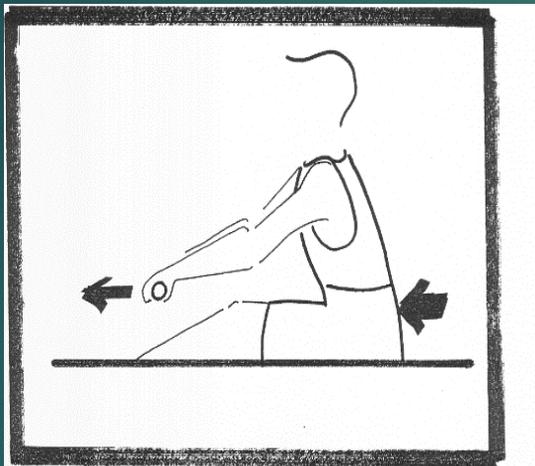
## Checkpoints:

Inside shoulder and arm relaxed.

Outside wrist straight.

Handle speed stays constant around the turn.

# RECOVERY 3



## RECOVERY 3

Hands slow between knees and feet to allow time for body to swing forward from hips into strong position.  
Pelvis must rotate in line with lumbar spine.  
Loose reach with arms and shoulders.

As the arms begin to straighten the body swings over towards the catch position. The handle slows as it passes the knees and the hips and pelvis must rotate to keep the lower back in a strong position. By the time the rower is at quarter slide the body is in the catch position described above.

The rower should feel the pelvis bones move on the seat as she / he rocks over. The back stays tall and the weight is returned to the footboard. When the rhythm in this part of the stroke is right the rower feels as if there is plenty of time, no hurry.

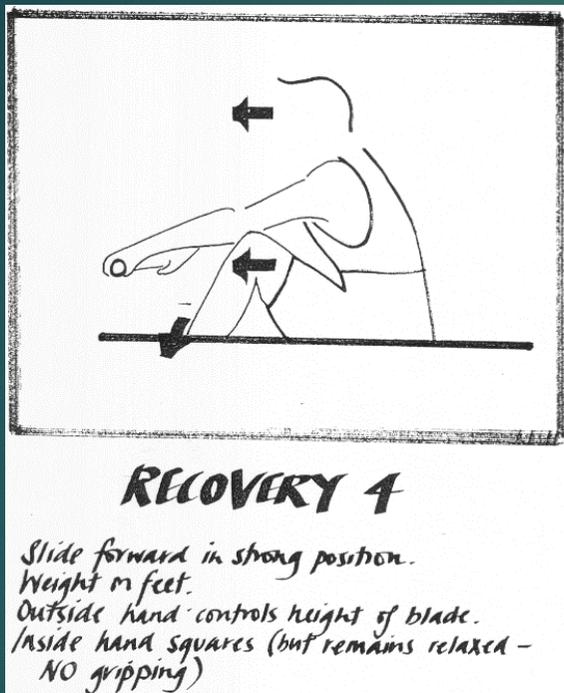
### Checkpoints:

Pelvis rotation. The low back and pelvis must stay in line. Low back pointing towards the stern before sliding starts.

Shoulders loose and relaxed.

Upper back loose and rounded.

# RECOVERY 4



From here the movement is bending the legs. The feet must have pressure on the footboard at all times. As the handle passes over the feet the inside hand turns the blade back to vertical.

The rower should feel that he / she has to apply a little pressure to the footboard to slow themselves down as they approach the catch. Very relaxed.

## Checkpoints:

Body tall, relaxed and still.

Shoulders parallel with the handle.

Outside wrist flat, outside hand on the handle.