

Concept2 Indoor Rower

Fact Sheet 5:

How To Row An Indoor Rowing Race

Whilst indoor rowing is a great activity for children, and care must be taken not to over stretch the growing body (see Fact Sheet 4) many children respond well to a competitive environment. For children in Year Groups 7-10 a recommended race time, approved by NGB has been established. In Year Groups 11-13 young adults are allowed to race over the standard race distance of 2000 m.

- **Race Preparation**

Write out your race plan for the day in bullet point format. This prevents errors caused by miscalculations and nerves.

Know your warm up routine; it prepares the body and mind for competition. Be careful not to overdo your warm up. Warm up should progress gradually but provide sufficient intensity to increase muscle and core temperature without causing fatigue or reducing energy stores.

Finish your warm up in time to find your race machine, allow time to walk from the warm up area to the race arena and be ready to race 10 minutes before your start time.

- **The Race**

For energy distribution the best way to row a race is even pace and stroke rate.

The start: 'Use it or lose it' 5-10 hard drives to get the flywheel spinning and average pace on target. If you go off too fast in the early stages you will probably pay for it later in the race.

The middle: This is where you conserve energy and delay fatigue. Settle into race pace and keep stroke rate and pace as even as possible. Resist the temptation to 'chase' other rowers - row your own race.

The finish: Only you will know whether you have the energy to do a fast finish. Delay your finish spurt until you feel you can maintain technique, increase the stroke rate and pace and hold on until the finish.

- **After the Race**

Avoid falling on the floor, keep moving up and down the slide, active recovery will help the body recover quickly so do some cooling down on your race machine before leaving the race area.

Whilst indoor rowing is a great activity for children, and care must be taken not to over stretch the growing body (see Fact Sheet 4) many children respond well to a competitive environment. For children in Year Groups 7-10 a recommended race time, approved by NGB has been established. In Year Groups 11-13 young adults are allowed to race over the standard race distance of 2000 m.

Race time/distance by Year Group

Year Group	Race Time (mins)	Race Distance (m)
7	2'	
8	3'	
9	4'	
10	5'	
11	N/A	2000
12	N/A	2000
13	N/A	2000

These are the times/distances used at the British Indoor Rowing Championship and in a number of Schools and Regional Competitions.

The British Indoor Rowing Championship categories vary slightly with classification by age for J11, J12, J13, J14, J15, J16 and then J18 heavyweight and J18 lightweight. For example to enter the J11 competition a competitor must be under 11 years of age at the 31st August in the competition year. Male lightweights are 75 kg and under, female lightweights are 61.5 kgs and under. J11 and J12 competitors race 2 minutes, J13 – 3 minutes, J14 – 4 minutes, J15 – 5 minutes. J16 and J18 race 2000 m. All competitions encourage and welcome entries from Adaptive Rowers.

For many competitors (remembering that children develop at different rates) the competition is not about winning but improving the distance rowed in the time limit or improving their 2000 m performance. There is a huge range of distances and times completed and a look at the 2007 British Indoor Rowing Championship results show the diversity:

British Indoor Rowing Championship – 2007 Results

Category	Race Time/Distance	Result Range (metres)		Result Range (min:sec)	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
J11	2'	343-528	362-493	-	-
J12	2'	362-533	376-522	-	-
J13	3'	563-870	533-811	-	-
J14	4'	826-1177	786-1091	-	-
J15	5'	1095-1529	1023-1368	-	-
J16	2000m	-	-	6:29.4–9:27.9	7:27.2–10:43.2
J18 Hwt	2000m	-	-	6:07.9–7:45.6	7:06.2–8:48.8
J18 Lwt	2000m	-	-	6:32.7–8:14.4	7:21.5–10:44.7

Indoor Rowing is a sport for all irrespective of ability; over 800 Juniors competed in the 2007 Championship. Indoor Rowing is an excellent all round body exercise and if good technique and exercise habits are encouraged it is a safe and effective way for children to develop physical activity at their own pace.

Race Preparation

The day before:

DO

Rest (light row only if you must)
 Remain well hydrated
 Eat sensibly (lightweights must eat)
 Try to relax
 Pack kit ready for race day including food and drink
 Get to bed early
 Check the time of your race and route to venue

DON'T

Train hard
 Stay up late
 Drink alcohol or caffeine
 Worry

On the day:

DO

Get to the venue early
 Warm up properly for your race
 Find your race machine at least 10 minutes before your race
 Fix your race plan in your mind and imagine the race
 Cool down properly
 Relax and enjoy the experience
 Support each other

Top Tip 1: Write out your race plan for the day in bullet point format. This prevents errors caused by miscalculations and nerves.

Warm up

Know your warm up routine; it prepares the body and mind for competition. Be careful not to overdo your warm up. Warm up should progress gradually but provide sufficient intensity to increase muscle and core temperature without causing fatigue or reducing energy stores.

Finish your warm up in time to find your race machine, allow time to walk from the warm up area to the race arena and be ready to race 10 minutes before your start time.

Year Groups 7-10 (J11-J15) may use the Warm up routines for the Very Hard Exercise Zone detailed in **Fact Sheet 4**.

The race

For energy distribution the best way to row a race is even pace and stroke rate but:

The start: 'Use it or lose it' 5-10 hard drives to get the flywheel spinning and average pace on target. If you go off too fast in the early stages you will probably pay for it later in the race. Try to settle into your middle race pace within 10-15 strokes of the start.

The middle: This is where you conserve energy and delay fatigue. Settle into race pace and keep stroke rate and pace as even as possible. Resist the temptation to 'chase' other rowers - row your own race.

The finish: Only you will know whether you have the energy to do a fast finish. Delay your finish spurt until you feel you can maintain technique, increase the stroke rate and pace and hold on until the finish.

At the finish: Congratulate yourself! Try to avoid falling on the floor, keep moving up and down the slide, active recovery will help the body recover quickly so do some cooling down on your race machine before leaving the race area.

Cool down

Cool down is important; it helps the body recover. 10-15 minutes of gentle rowing should be enough.

Top Tip 2: from Graham Benton Open Indoor Rowing Champion 2004-2007 (PB 5:42.5)

Before you start, make sure you have a clear race plan in your mind and stick to it until at least 500m to go,

Have a split in your mind that you intend to pull for the whole middle section of the 2000 m - that is all that matters! That split can be 1-2 seconds slower than the average that you need to hit your target 2000 m time but with a faster start and finish you should get the 2000 m time that you want. For example, my magic number is 1:26. So I go off as hard as I can for about 7-8 strokes and then let my split drift back up to 1:26 by around 150-200m. Then I focus on making every stroke a 1:26. If I see a 1:27 then I focus on making the next one a 1:26.

Take it one stroke at a time, the next stroke is all that matters. Any strokes you have taken are history so don't let them worry you. Stick on your target split right through until about 400m to go. At that point look to stay strong and perhaps take 1-2 seconds off your split.

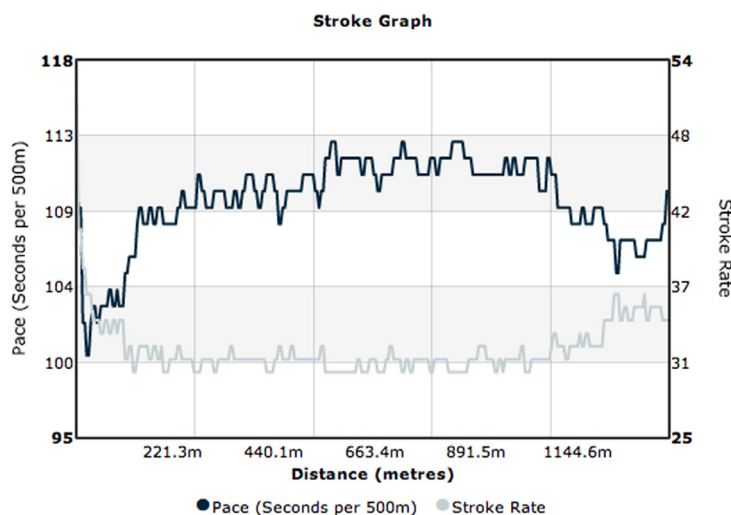
Sit on the new target until about 250m to go. Now you should be thinking about going for the finish. Don't change anything significantly about your stroke, just drive your legs down harder and this should take the rate up slightly. Keep building on the pace whilst keeping your technique good and you will find yourself going quicker and quicker.

The key things are - have a realistic target in your mind, keep your plan simple, don't change your plan through the race, keep your technique throughout. Good luck. Graham

Race Examples:

J15 Women 5 minute race

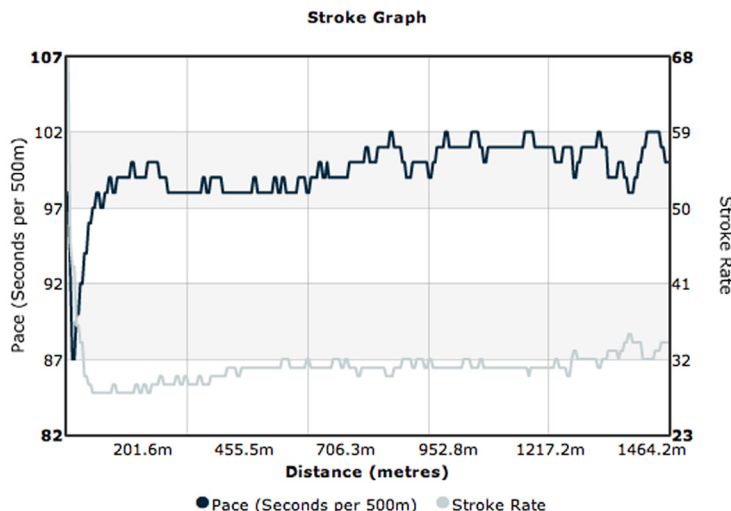
Distance	276m	273m	269m	269m	278m	1365m
Time	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	5:00.0
Split	1:48.7	1:49.9	1:51.5	1:51.5	1:47.9	
Av 500m Pace	1:49.9					



This graph is a good demonstration of even paced rowing in the middle part of the race with a fast start and very fast finish. Cut the pace back after 150 m and settled into a stroke rate range of 30-32 until inside the last minute. Increased the stroke rate slightly to 34-36 in the last minute to good effect and finished with a last minute average pace of 1:47.9. A well balanced row.

J15 Men 5 minute race

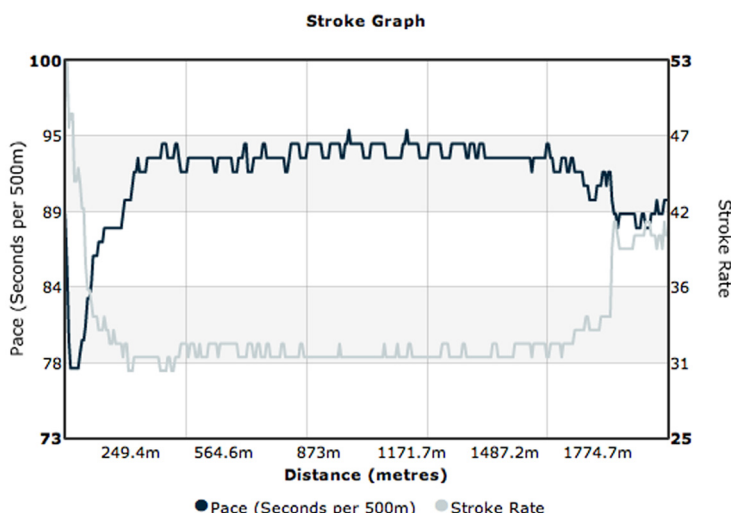
Distance	303m	305m	301m	297m	298m	1503m
Time	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	1:00.0	5:00.0
Split	1:39.0	1:38.4	1:39.7	1:41.0	1:40.7	
Av 500m Pace						1:39.8



A good demonstration of fairly even paced rowing, slight hint of too fast in the first 2 minutes but overall only 2.6 variance on the 1:00 split averages. After a fast start cut back quickly into race pace after approximately 100 m and maintained a good settled stroke rate range of 28-32 for most of the 5 minutes. A well controlled race.

J18 Men Hwt 2000m race

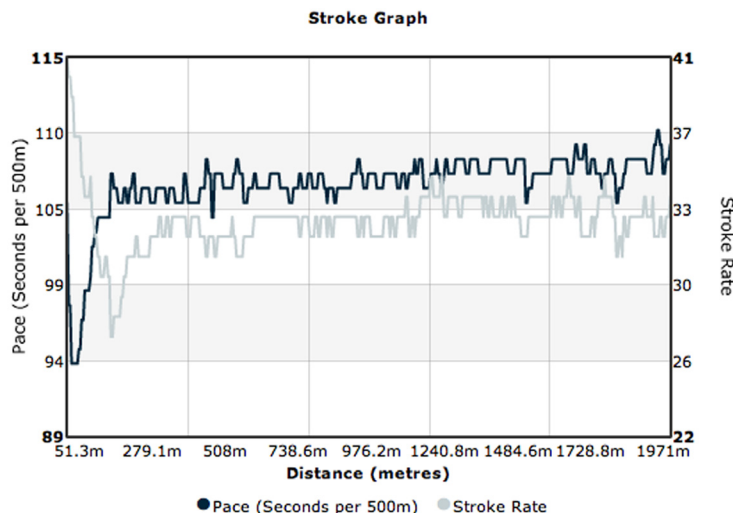
Distance	500m	1,000m	1,500m	2,000m
Time	1:30.1	3:03.4	4:36.9	6:08.0
Split	1:30.1	1:33.3	1:33.5	1:31.1
Av 500m Pace	1:32.0			



This graph shows a positive split race (first half slightly faster than the second half), a very fast start with the first 500 m the quickest of the race. The cut back to mid race pace was delayed until approximately 250 m but from this point the pace and stroke rate were very even at 1:33 and 31-32. Despite the fast start the pace and stroke rate were significantly increased in the last 200 m for a very fast finish. A very effective row.

J18 Women Hwt 2000m race

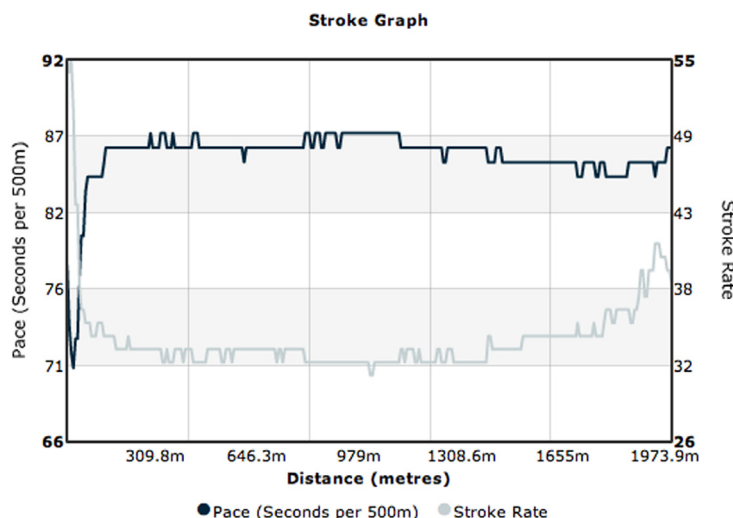
Distance	500m	1,000m	1,500m	2,000m
Time	1:45.3	3:31.6	5:18.8	7:06.3
Split	1:45.3	1:46.3	1:47.2	1:47.5
Av 500m Pace	1:46.6			



A positive split race (first half slightly faster than the second half). Cut back after 150 m and stroke rate maintained in a tight range of 32-34 for much of the race. A very even paced second half of the race with just 0.3 seconds between the average of the last two 500 m segments. A very controlled row.

Open Men Hwt 2000m race

Distance	500m	1,000m	1,500m	2,000m
Time	1:25.3	2:51.6	4:17.6	5:42.4
Split	1:25.3	1:26.3	1:26.0	1:24.8
Av 500m Pace	1:25.6			

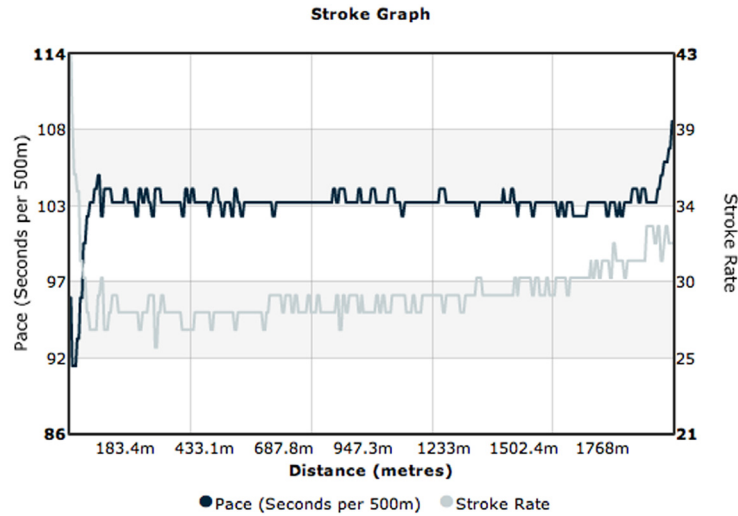


This is the graph for Graham Benton the reigning British Champion – probably demonstrates an ideal race profile for pace and stroke rate. Negative split the race (this means second half slightly faster than the first half) but pace range is very tight with only 1.5 seconds between the fastest and slowest 500 m segments. Fast first 500 m and even pace for the middle 1000 m, in the last 500 m he increased the pace to 1:24-1.25 to make the last 500 m the fastest segment of the race.

Stroke rate settled in the 32-34 range for the middle 1500 m of the race – note how quickly he cut back to race pace after a quick start (he was on 1:26 pace and 34 strokes at 150 m).

Open Women Hwt 2000m race

Distance	500m	1,000m	1,500m	2,000m
Time	1:43.3	3:26.5	5:09.6	6:52.7
Split	1:43.3	1:43.2	1:43.1	1:43.1
Av 500m Pace	1:43.2			



A slightly different approach from the Open Women’s Champion Jo Lyons, essentially even pace throughout only 0.2 of a second variance on the average pace per 500 m splits. Again note how she cut back to race pace after a quick start (1:43 pace and 28 strokes at 100 m). Stroke rate settled in the 28-30 range for the next 1600 m. A superb even paced row.