

Hull Lifesaving Museum
South Shore Youth Rowing
Clothing and Food, Spring 2016

Improper dress is a safety hazard, every bit as much as an unseaworthy boat or unprepared crew. Please take this issue seriously -- and ask for advice if you are unsure what to wear or how to find what you need.

RULE OF THUMB:

IT'S STILL COLDER OUT THERE THAN YOU THINK.

LAYERS

Since marine weather can change rapidly from cool to warm and chilly to Arctic, dressing in layers of appropriate material is essential to enjoying and benefiting from outdoor winter athletics. Out into the Harbor you do not want cotton or silk next to your skin when you will be sweating in cold air, because these fibers hold moisture and will cause you to chill rapidly. Wool on your feet makes sense, and polypro, or other wicking fabric next to the rest of your skin, is ideal. Forgetting feet for the moment, your body will want a light first layer, one or two heavier layers (including, perhaps, a sweatshirt), and a windbreaker. Should you heat up in the course of a row, you ought to be able to strip down to one or two layers. After practice, during cool-down, a dry and warm outer layer is essential. Clothes should be loose fitting, in order to allow your body's warmth to circulate and form an insulating layer.

HEADGEAR

Since most of your body's heat escapes through your head, a hat, hood, or stocking cap is compulsory gear. (Please don't think about style over safety, and forego the baseball caps until well into the season.) A hat on your head will keep your feet and hands amazingly warm. The rules of layering also apply to heads: You can always pull your hat off, but when you need it, you want it dry and nearby.

FOOTWEAR

The bilges (floors) of boats are wet and funky. Old shoes that you are not afraid to get wet and dirty are required. Leave dry shoes and socks in a pack on shore so you can walk away from the practice without squishing. For warmth, feet should not be packed tightly into shoes or boots, but should be layered with socks and given room to move. Waterproof boots are ideal. **NO SANDALS OR SHORTS ARE PERMITTED DURING SPRING ROWING.** (We will let you know when/if this rule changes as spring progresses.)

GLOVES

People wear gloves to row for two reasons: to protect their hands from cold and to protect them from blisters. Light bike gloves are the best and cheapest solution for the blister problem, although wearing no gloves and building calluses will serve you best in the long run. For warmth, anything that gives wind protection will help. Rag or ski mittens or garden or work gloves are quite effective. Avoid anything with slippery palms.

FOOD AND WATER

People get hungry on the water. Having something to munch and drink is a great reward and makes sense in terms of good health. Arrive for rowing well nourished and with plenty of snacks and water. (However, a major feed less than two hours before any aerobic activity will lead to intense gastro-intestinal distress.) Think in terms of replenishing, and bring enough snacks and liquid to care for yourself. Drinking plenty of fluids, especially water, is critical to all healthy exercise, and is essential to your body's heating-cooling system.

Please call (781) 925-5433 with questions.