

# DragonMax Fitness Program

## TIME COMMITMENT

To get the benefit of this strength building program over time, a general commitment of

- 3 days/week On the Water (OTW) Training (dragon boat practice, OC paddling) and
- 3 days/week of Land Training is recommended.

Always allow 1 day/week for rest and recovery. If 3 days/ week is not available, shoot for 2 days/week for OTW and Land Training.

Example of Strength Building Training Schedule:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday-Land Training.
- Saturday, Sunday, Thursday-OTW Training.

An example of an endurance focused schedule, if that is your need, is

- 2 days/week OTW training
- 2 days/week of Strength Training (weights) and
- 2 days/week of aerobic exercise with 20-30 minute goal in Target Heart Rate zone (see below).

As major race dates get closer, the coaches may recommend more days/week OTW and fewer days/week of strength training or aerobics.

## LAND TRAINING

Land Training can be in the gym or home with exercises w/weights OR Body-Weight exercises (Calisthenics) if no weights are available.

There are dozens of strength training exercises that can be used for each muscle group but the following are recommended because they replicate as close as possible, the specific muscle groups used in dragon boating. When performing these exercises, do what works best for your body to prevent injury such as making modifications to the exercise for a preexisting or old injury.

Land Training should consist of Warm Up stretches, Abs/Core, Aerobics, and Strength Exercises and all together should take around 1 hour/training day.

## FIVE MAIN MUSCLE GROUPS

For dragon boating we use 5 main muscle groups:

1. **Back (Latissimus Dorsi or Lats)** - on the catch and paddle stroke back
2. **Shoulders (Deltoids)** - catch and paddle stroke
3. **Chest (Pectoralis)** - to maintain frame when holding paddle and stroke back
4. **Back of Upper Arms (Triceps)** - on the drop for the catch
5. **Legs (Quadriceps)** - leg drive on stroke back

## STRENGTH TRAINING EXPLAINED - Gym or No Gym?

Exercises with Gym weights or home weights (dumbbells/barbells) vs. body-weight exercises (calisthenics):

Exercises with weights allows focused isolation of the muscle for growth whereas body-weight exercises involve multiple muscle groups as used in everyday activities allowing strength, flexibility and coordination. You can choose to do only exercises with weights or body weight exercises or a combination of both.

## HOW MANY REPETITIONS AND WHAT WEIGHT DO I START WITH?

Strength Exercises and Body-Weight Exercises:

do 3 sets of 15 repetitions (reps) w/1 minute rest between sets. If you are new to strength building, start with lighter weights, fewer sets (2 instead of 3) and fewer reps (10-12) for a week or so until it's easy, then increase progressively.

Always use good form and posture to prevent injury. For exercises with weights, concentrate on isolating the involved muscle vs. using the whole body to move the weight (cheating). And start with a weight that challenges you but leaves room for improvement - higher weight. Make it progressive, meaning keep challenging yourself as you adapt and progress to the next level of difficulty as soon as you can all the while being mindful of preventing injury.

Do what's best for your goals. If weight loss goal, use lighter weights with higher repetitions (20) and heavy on aerobic exercises, stretching.

If muscle gain goal, use progressively higher weights with fewer reps (set of 15 reps, then 12, then 10 as in pyramiding). The risk of higher weights to soon is injury so do it gradually and always stretch, do abs and aerobics first.

## HOW YOUR MUSCLES GROW

DOMS - Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness. The "good" soreness that occurs 1-2 days after a strength workout when you've challenged your muscle with a weight or exercise. The muscle soreness occurs initially the first time you do the weighted exercise and on each increase in weight as your muscles adapt and grow. Your muscle adapts and grows when it is recovering/healing and prepares you for the next time you lift that weight.

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### WARM UP EXERCISES

Warm Up exercises to "Warm Up" the muscles to prevent injury - hold each stretch for at least 10 seconds for all 5 muscle groups. Yoga stretches, jumping jacks, alternate knee to elbow are some good warm up exercises. You can also do 10-15 minutes on an ERG, stationary bicycle or treadmill here to warm up as well.

## ABDOMINAL/CORE EXERCISES

Six Abdominal/Core Exercises - do 3 sets of 20 seconds for each Ab exercise except for the Russian Twist and Plank-see notes below. Please view the YouTube links for descriptions.

- V Sit Ups <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UVgs18Y1P4>
- Reverse Crunches <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyv14e2QDq0>
- Bicycle Crunches <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1we3bh9uhqY>
- Flutter Kicks <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/0bSKm4jSLiA>
- Russian Twist - with 6 or 8 pound ball, sitting on butt w/feet off the ground and touching ball to right side then left (count of 1) for goal of 60 in 1 minute <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeAtimSCxsY>
- Plank - try to hold for at least 2 minutes then build up for longer times.

## AEROBIC EXERCISES

ERG, running, bicycling, swimming, jump rope, hiking to boost endurance. Try to incorporate 10-15 minutes of aerobic exercise during strength training. Do aerobic exercise that raises your heart rate, gets you to breathe harder and sweat.

For days dedicated to aerobic exercise, strive to do an aerobic exercise that causes you to reach your Target Heart Rate range for up to 30 minutes. The Target Heart Rate range is 50% - 85% of your maximum safe heart rate (220 minus your age) and the range corresponds to low, moderate, and intense exercise. You can start with 10 or 15 minutes then work your way up over time.

Target Heart Rate gives you an idea of how hard you are working during an exercise and a baseline to compare to as your fitness progresses. As your fitness improves, you should be able to maintain your Target Heart Rate for longer periods of time, your overall heart rate and work of breathing should slow down and you won't be so out of breath at the end of a dragon boat race! If you have a heart condition, check with your doctor before pursuing Target Heart Rate exercises.

See the article on Target Heart Rate for age specific zones:

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/target-heart-rates>

## THE STRENGTH BUILDING EXERCISES

### BACK (Lats)

- Weight exercises: Single Arm Dumbbell Rows on bench (do both arms separately) and/or Overhead Lat pull down with universal pulley and straight arms.
- For Body Weight exercises, in general, try to do 3 sets of 15 reps or for a duration.

- Body Weight Alternatives: Pull Ups, Inverted Row, Superman - lie facedown with arms in front and legs extended then lift and hold both arms and legs for 10 seconds for 3 sets, Upside down Snow Angel, Prone Pull, Plank Pull are all options. Videos of Body Weight Alternatives are available on YouTube. Just search for Inverted Row on YouTube for example.

Videos of weight exercises:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xysTlbDUm0>

[https://www.youtube.com/shorts/AUnS\\_L4i2fl](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/AUnS_L4i2fl)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpdtmlqm8EQ>

## SHOULDERS

- Weight exercise: Lateral or frontal dumbbell raises with 5, 10 or 15 pounds.
- Body Weight Alternatives: Shoulder Taps, Bear Crawls, Superman (arms in I, Y, T positions)

Video of weight exercise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0PQnCnqFI8>

## CHEST

- Weight exercises: chest flys or press with dumbbells (10, 15, 20lb.) or Bench Press with gym barbell.
- Body Weight Alternative-push ups with good body plank form and wide or narrow hands. Can begin push ups with kitchen counter, then bench, then floor.

Video of weight exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KjVm4Z2KrU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WIFbE1S-yM>

## TRICEPS

- Weight exercises: bent over or overhead tricep extension or tricep pull down with universal pulley.
- Body Weight Alternatives: Tricep Dips on bench, Plank Ups - start in elbow plank then alternate one arm at a time up to straight arm plank.

Video of weight exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSOoLq9nWqE>

## LEGS

- Weight exercises: Squats with heavy single dumbbell (20, 25, 30), or walking lunges with pair of dumbbells hanging in hands, or Leg Press if access to gym.
- Body weight alternatives: jump squats, burpees, lunges, Step-Ups onto platform.

Video of weight exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/O0JTAPFH7zM>

Remember to eat healthy, drink at least 64 ounces of water daily, strive for healthy social, spiritual, family and mental health aspects of your life and seek help if you need it.