

LTR FAQs

Where does the Learn-to-Row (LTR) Program take place?

LTR participants should report to the Aqueduct Rowing Club boathouse at the corner of Rt. 146 and Aqueduct Road in Niskayuna. Our boathouse has a picture of old time rowers on the side of the building. Your coach will meet you there.

Where do I park?

There is some parking up near the boathouse, but we share the parking lot with a local business. You should stay toward the left and be careful not to block the patrons of the garage next door or the kayakers that leave from The Boathouse store. Areas where there are cones are parking prohibited. If you take the boathouse road around to the left, it ends in a cul-de-sac on which there is plenty of space to park.

What should I bring with me?

You should always bring a full water bottle. Rowing is an athletic endeavor and participants get thirsty. Sunglasses are a must for summer sunshine, and sunscreen is highly recommended. Depending on the weather, you may also want to bring layers of clothing and a change of clothes for after your row.

Is there a place to change at the boathouse?

Yes, there are two changing rooms with curtains.

What should I wear for the LTR classes?

It's best to wear clothing that allows freedom of movement but is not too baggy. Rowers tend to prefer Spandex shorts and tee-shirts or athletic shirts. Bike shorts work just fine. Because we row in all kinds of weather, we have to adapt to weather conditions. We tend to wear long running tights and long-sleeved shirts in colder weather and/or dress in layers that can be removed as you get warm (and you will!).

Please wear something sturdy on your feet. We are barefooted or sock-footed while in the boats, so if you can wear something that slides on and off, it tends to save some time. Flip flops do not provide enough protection for your feet as you carry the boat up and down the embankment to the water.

What do the LTR classes involve?

Generally, the coach will start with a warm up and show you the rowing stroke on a rowing machine called an "erg." "Erg" is short for ergometer. The coach will also go over some basic rower safety considerations. Then we get you into a boat and on the water.

In order to do that, you will need to carry your boat down to the docks and put the boat in the water. Your coxswain or coach will go over boat carrying procedures. Your coxswain will guide you as you carry the boat as a team down to the water. We teach our new rowers in 8-rower or 4-rower boats, called an 8+ or a 4+. The “+” is the presence of a coxswain (pronounced “COX-un”), who will steer the boat and give directions that will keep the rowers all together as they row. Your coach will be located in a separate launch and will stay close and guide you while you are on the water.

Do I need to be a good swimmer in order to row?

Rowers should be decent swimmers and be able to keep themselves afloat if the boat should go over. The coach will go over general safety procedures on the first night of class. We do not wear lifejackets when rowing. The coach carries lifejackets in the launch.

Will I get a chance to race?

One of the best parts of learning to row is racing. To give LTR participants a taste of racing, the club holds “hat races” toward the end of the LTR sessions. The names of all the learning and experienced rowers are put into a hat and boat assignments are drawn. The LTRs get a chance to race in boats with experienced rowers. Races are short and fast and a lot of fun. If you don’t feel competitive, rowing is still great exercise and great outdoor fun.

Will I get to meet other club members?

Yes, you will. Our club members are friendly and approachable. Don’t be surprised if during your first few experiences on the water, experienced club members are in your boat. You will meet club members who see it as a privilege to help and guide new rowers. You will also meet more of our members at the hat races, including those who may not row on the days LTRs practice.

Can my family or friends watch me?

Family members are welcome. We try to keep everyone a safe distance from the moving boats and oars, however, so they will be asked not to come down onto the dock. There are some lovely spots in the park along the shore that are great for viewing the boats. Be sure to invite them to club events to see you race!