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# Indoor Rowing Races

Judy Geer



Some of you may remember reading Peter Dreissigacker's article here last winter about training for a personal record (PR) in a 2000m indoor rowing time trial. He also described the CRASH-B Sprints, a.k.a. the World Indoor Rowing Championships, held each February in Boston. Well, it's almost indoor rowing race season again, and this time we're giving you some lead time so you can fine-tune your 2K PR in time to test yourself at the nearest official satellite regatta.

There is a whole series of satellite indoor races held around the U.S. and Canada leading up to the CRASH-B's. These races are open to everyone; no qualifying time required. They all offer the 2K race distance; some also

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offer longer or shorter events, and some run relays as well. Every year, up to four qualifiers are identified from each satellite race to receive funding from Concept2 for the trip to compete at the CRASH-B's. Qualification is based on meeting a pre-established qualifying time for your gender, weight class, and age group. The full list of qualifying times can be found on Concept2's CRASH-B page.

## Find your pace for the 2000-meter race

One of the most important aspects of race preparation is determining your optimum race pace, so that you can manage your output levels optimally throughout the race. In the excitement of race day, it's all too easy to go out too hard, which generally means tiring early and ending up with a disappointing finish. The key to avoiding this is to know your pace ahead of time.

Pace is expressed as time per 500 meters. This is displayed in the central box on the PM. A pace of 2:14 means that, at your current speed, it would take you 2 minutes and 14 seconds to row 500 meters. The smaller the number, the less time it takes to row 500 meters. So, the smaller your pace number, the faster you are rowing. At the end of a fixed-distance piece, your average pace for the piece will be displayed as shown in the photo.

Here is a step-by-step protocol for determining your pace for a 2000-meter race, developed by Concept2 co-founder Dick Dreissigacker.

1. Set your PM for a fixed-distance piece of 2000 meters. As you row, it will count down from 2000 to 0 meters. Row the 2K, starting easy, at a pace that you know you can maintain for the whole piece. If you feel comfortable and strong, increase your intensity in the second half of the piece.
2. At the end of the 2K row, record your average pace (time per 500) for the entire piece.
3. For your next 2K piece, start out rowing at your average pace from the first piece. If you feel comfortable and strong, increase your intensity in the second half of the piece.
4. At the end of the row, record your average pace for the entire 2000 meters (time per 500).
5. Repeat this process until you close in on the

best average pace that you are able maintain for 2000 meters. As you get closer to your real race pace, the 2Ks will get tougher, so be sure to be rested before you attempt each 2K trial. You probably shouldn't do more than one of these test 2Ks per week, especially as the race date approaches.

After three or four of these pieces you should be homing in on your target 2K race pace.

This is the pace at which you should start your 2K race. It will take discipline to keep to this race pace, but stick with it, at least until the last 500 meters. At that time, if you feel strong, you can go ahead and increase the intensity. In fact, the goal is to completely "empty the tank" by the end of the race. This race pace will also be a good target for interval workouts as you prepare for the big event.

## Online rankings and personal logbooks

If you can't find a nearby race on a day that works for you, you can still find out where your 2K PR stacks up by entering it in the Concept2 online ranking. Just select your choice of race distance, age group, gender, country, etc., and you'll get a ranked listing of everyone in the world who has submitted a PR to the ranking.

In order to submit your own PR, you'll need to set up an online logbook for yourself on the site. Then you can enter all your workouts, and when you have a PR, you can click on the "Rank" button to submit it to the ranking.

Even if you don't want to submit your PR, the personal log is a good resource for tracking your own progress. You can:

- Enter and keep track of all of your workouts online.
- See a list of your personal world ranking entries.
- Access your personal pace chart history, comparing workouts of similar distance or time with each other.
- See weekly and monthly summary statistics as well as total meters and time.
- Export your log to a text file.
- See your average daily meters since your first row of the season.

## How can races in multiple locations and different rowers be fair?

The accuracy and repeatability of the Concept2 Performance Monitor (PM) is what makes the sport of indoor rowing possible. And the self-calibration feature of the PM takes local conditions such as altitude into effect, so that your scores can be compared with those of anyone else in the world, whether their pieces are rowed high in the Rockies or at sea level. It also means national team and collegiate coaches can test and rank their athletes across the board. And, at a personal level, it is a powerful tool in monitoring your own fitness and progress.

## More CrossFit Journal articles on preparing for an erg race

- "Strategies for a Seven-Minute 2K on the Concept II Rower," by Greg Glassman (November 2002)

- "Row Fast: How to Prepare for an Erg Test," by Peter Dreissigacker (Feb 2007)

**Judy Geer** was a member of three U.S. Olympic Rowing Teams (1976, 1980, 1984). She placed sixth in both 1976 and 1984; 1980 was the boycott year.) Since then, she and her husband Dick Dreissigacker (also an Olympic rower, and co-founder of Concept2 Rowing) have raised three children, now ages 15, 18, and 20, who are national-level competitive athletes in their own right. Judy continues to train and race in sculling, running, Nordic skiing, and biathlon.