

Build through winter. Return ready.

28 training weeks / 56 strength sessions / home or gym

Target water return: last week of May 2027. The crew has no pool or paddle-erg access. This plan builds land fitness; the catch, boat connection and crew timing need coached water practice.

Weeks 1-8: Foundation

Learn controlled movement and build repeatable work.

Weeks 9-16: Build strength

Progress resistance and broaden pulling, carrying and trunk work.

Weeks 17-24: Strength into power

Practise a few quick, controlled repetitions while maintaining strength.

Weeks 25-28: Ready for water

Maintain fitness and arrive at the late-May return with recovery in hand.

Coach review is required after weeks 8, 16 and 24. Finish the current block and review movement, recovery, equipment and any concerns before the next block is approved.

Your weekly rhythm

- Two strength sessions, at least 48 hours apart. Use A, then B; repeat a week when needed.
- One or two easy conditioning sessions. Start with one if returning to training.
- One short technique and mobility practice; leave room for rest and optional easy movement.
- Missed a day? Reschedule. Do not double up or compress the program to meet May.

For generally healthy adult club paddlers. Individual restrictions need an adapted plan. This is a coaching program, not a medical assessment or a proven optimal 28-week protocol.

Your week-by-week targets

Main strength exercises only. Quick work, carries, trunk and shoulder exercises use their own targets on the next pages. Resistance is individual; no maximum lifting test is required.

Week	Focus	Main sets x reps	Reps left	Easy min
1	Learn the movement	2 x 8	4	20
2	Build consistency	2 x 10	3	20
3	Build work capacity	3 x 10	3	25
4	Build endurance	3 x 10-12	2	25
5	Build strength	3 x 8	2	30
6	Progress strength	3 x 8-10	2	30
7	Strength & readiness	3 x 6-8	2	35
8	Recover & review	2 x 8	4	25
9	Build repeatable strength	3 x 8-10	3	30
10	Build repeatable strength	3 x 8-10	3	30
11	Build repeatable strength	3 x 6-8	3	30
12	Lighter week & coach review	2 x 8	4	25
13	Build repeatable strength	3 x 6-8	3	35
14	Build repeatable strength	3 x 6-8	3	35
15	Build repeatable strength	3 x 6-8	3	35
16	Lighter week & coach review	2 x 8	4	25
17	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
18	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
19	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
20	Lighter week & coach review	2 x 8	4	25
21	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
22	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
23	Quick work / control	3 x 6-8	3	40
24	Lighter week & coach review	2 x 8	4	25
25	Maintain & prepare for water	2 x 8-10	3	30
26	Maintain & prepare for water	2 x 8-10	3	30
27	Maintain & prepare for water	2 x 8-10	3	30
28	Lighter week & coach review	2 x 8	4	25

Leave clean repetitions in reserve: stop while you could still perform the listed number with good technique. Increase resistance only after two controlled exposures at the top of the repetition range. Lighter weeks and the final four weeks do not chase new loads.

Endurance minutes are a target to build toward. Repeat the previous duration or use 10-15 minutes when returning. The app tracks completed sessions, so actual calendar dates can move.

Workouts A and B: build the base

Foundation / weeks 1-8

WORKOUT A

Squat / supported row / hip hinge / incline push-up / dead bug

WORKOUT B

Split squat / supported row / hip hinge / incline push-up / bent-knee side plank

Strength / weeks 9-16

WORKOUT A

Squat / supported row / hip hinge / incline push-up / suitcase carry

WORKOUT B

Split squat / lat pulldown / hip hinge / incline push-up / Pallof press / wall slide

Home without a band and rated anchor: use a supported row instead of the pulldown, and a suitcase carry instead of the Pallof press. Do not improvise an overhead anchor. These are useful alternatives, not identical movements.

Accessory targets

- Dead bug / Pallof press: start at 2 x 5 per side; progress controlled work toward 8.
- Side plank / suitcase carry: start at 2 x 10 seconds per side; build toward 25 seconds.
- Wall slides: 2 x 6 comfortable repetitions; build toward 8. No added weight is prescribed.
- In lighter weeks, use one short accessory set and familiar or easier resistance.

A session you can repeat

Warm up with 3 minutes of easy movement, 6 squats, 6 unloaded hinges, 6 wall push-ups and 4 gentle upper-back turns per side. Add light practice sets. Rest about 90 seconds in early weeks, 2 minutes for later main strength sets and 60-90 seconds for accessories.

Short-session fallback: A = squat, row, push-up. B = split squat, pull, push-up. Prefer full sessions most weeks so carrying, trunk and shoulder work are included.

Power, maintenance and conditioning

Power block / weeks 17-24

After coach approval: A begins with a quick bodyweight chair rise, then hinge, row, push-up and carry. B begins with a quick wall press, then split squat, pulldown, hinge, Pallof press and wall slide. Home alternatives still apply.

Quick work first, after warming up: weeks 17-18 use 2 x 3; weeks 19 and 21-23 use 3 x 3; lighter weeks 20 and 24 use 2 x 3. Rest 2 minutes. Lower slowly, stand or press promptly, and reset. No jumping, hand release or added weight. Stop when speed or control drops.

Low energy or an easier session uses ordinary controlled strength movements instead. Short sessions omit quick work. These are introductory power practices; experienced athletes may need an individual coached plan.

Maintenance / weeks 25-28

Keep the same A/B movement choices with 2 main sets and familiar resistance. Quick work stays at 2 x 3. Week 28 is lighter. Review readiness and adjust if the water return arrives before you finish; do not cram sessions.

Conditioning alongside strength

Keep one or two conversational sessions. In the approved power block, a paddler with an established aerobic base and good recovery may replace one easy session with controlled intervals. Easy-only training remains a valid option.

- Warm up easily for 8 minutes. Each round is 1 minute brisk at effort 6-7/10, followed by 2 minutes easy. Finish with 5 minutes easy.
- Weeks 17-18: 4 rounds (25 minutes total). Week 19: 5 rounds (28 minutes). Weeks 21-23: 6 rounds (31 minutes).
- No intervals in lighter weeks or the final maintenance block. Use a stationary bike or another familiar low-impact option. No all-out sprints.
- Use at most one interval session per week, replacing an easy conditioning session rather than adding another session. Keep at least a day away from strength work and choose easy training when recovery is poor.

Pain or altered movement: stop the affected exercise and save a concern for your coach. Do not force a progression to keep up with someone else.

Movement reference

Squat



1. Start



2. Move / hold

1. Plant your whole foot and hold the load close to your chest.
2. Bend hips and knees together through a comfortable depth.
3. Stand tall. Let your knees follow your toes.

Easier: Sit lightly onto a sturdy chair, then stand. Start without weight.

Breathe: Breathe in as you lower. Breathe out as you stand; keep your trunk supported.

"Push the floor away."

Builds leg force and control. The boat still requires a coached connection between your feet, seat and paddle.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Supported single-arm row



1. Start



2. Move / hold

1. Rest one hand on a fixed, sturdy support and brace your trunk.
2. Pull the weight toward your hip without twisting or shrugging.
3. Lower smoothly. Train both arms with the same repetitions.

Easier: Use a lighter load and a comfortable support height.

Breathe: Breathe out as you pull. Breathe in as you lower without losing your brace.

"Elbow toward your back pocket."

Supports pulling strength. A dumbbell row is a strength exercise; do not copy its elbow path into your paddle stroke.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Hip hinge



1. Start



2. Move / hold

1. Stand tall with soft knees and the load close to your legs.
2. Send your hips back; stop before your back starts to round.
3. Press through your feet and stand without leaning back.

Easier: Practise unloaded with your hips reaching toward a wall behind you.

Breathe: Breathe in as your hips move back. Breathe out as you stand, keeping your trunk supported.

"Close the car door with your hips."

Builds hip strength and trunk control that support a stable paddling position.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Movement reference

Incline push-up



1. Place your hands on a fixed bench, counter or wall.
2. Bring your chest toward the surface, keeping hips in line.
3. Press away with elbows angled back rather than flared wide.

Easier: Choose a higher fixed surface or a wall.

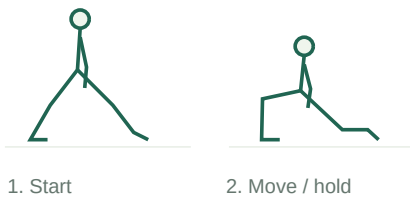
Breathe: Breathe in as you lower. Breathe out as you press away.

"Move as one long plank."

Develops pressing strength and shoulder control alongside pulling work. Top-hand technique is practised with your coach.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Split squat



1. Place one foot forward, keeping feet apart sideways. Both feet stay on the floor.
2. Bend both knees through a comfortable range. Keep the front foot planted.
3. Stand in the same stance. Complete both sides.

Easier: Hold a fixed counter and reduce the depth.

Breathe: Breathe in as you lower. Breathe out as you stand in the same stance.

"Down like an elevator."

Trains each leg and trunk control. Train both sides even when you usually paddle on one side.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Dead bug



1. Lie on your back with knees above hips and arms reaching up.
2. Slowly reach one arm and the opposite leg away, keeping your trunk quiet.
3. Return and switch sides. Shorten the reach if your lower back arches.

Easier: Keep your arms still and lower one bent-leg heel at a time.

Breathe: Breathe out gently as you reach. Keep breathing rather than holding your breath.

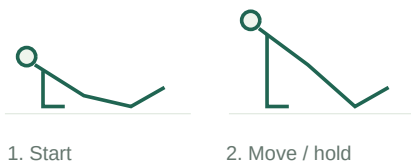
"Keep your belt line quiet."

Practises keeping your trunk controlled as your arms and legs move.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Movement reference

Bent-knee side plank



1. Lie on your side with knees bent and elbow under shoulder.
2. Lift hips until head, hips and knees line up.
3. Keep breathing, then lower gently. Repeat on the other side.

Easier: Use shorter holds. Stop if the supporting shoulder hurts.

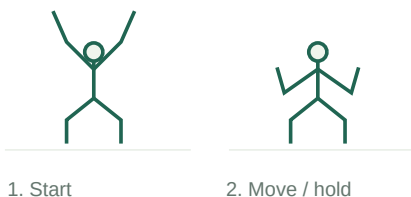
Breathe: Take small, steady breaths throughout the hold.

"Lift your waist away from the floor."

Builds sideways trunk support. It does not replace coached rotation and timing in the boat.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Lat pulldown



1. Gym: adjust the thigh pad and take a comfortable grip. Home: use a sound band and a manufacturer-rated overhead anchor checked by your coach.

2. Pull toward your upper chest with a quiet trunk. Do not pull behind your head or swing backward.

3. Return smoothly. No safe anchor at home? Choose the supported row alternative at check-in.

Easier: Reduce resistance. Use a supported row if the overhead position is uncomfortable.

Breathe: Breathe out as you pull; breathe in as you return.

"Elbows down; ribs stay quiet."

Develops vertical pulling strength alongside rows. The catch still needs water feedback.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Suitcase carry



1. Pick up a comfortable weight beside you with a controlled hinge. Stand tall.
2. Walk slowly along a clear, level path, or march gently in place. Keep shoulders level.
3. Set the weight down with control. Repeat for the same time on the other side.

Easier: Use a lighter bag or a shorter hold. A comfortable stationary hold is fine.

Breathe: Keep taking steady breaths while walking or holding.

"Carry the bag without leaning."

Develops grip and trunk control while force acts on one side.

[Open exercise reference](#)

Movement reference

Pallof press



1. Start

2. Move / hold

"Keep your shirt facing forward."

Develops control against unwanted rotation. Controlled paddling rotation remains a separate skill.

[Open exercise reference](#)

1. Stand side-on to a cable or sound band secured at chest height to a rated anchor. Hold the handle at your chest.

2. Press your hands forward without turning your trunk. Pause for a comfortable breath.

3. Bring your hands back slowly. Turn around and repeat on the other side.

Easier: Use less resistance or a shorter reach. Without a safe anchor, use the suitcase carry alternative.

Breathe: Breathe out gently as you press; keep breathing during the pause.

Forearm wall slide



1. Start

2. Move / hold

"Reach upward without lifting your ribs."

Practises comfortable shoulder movement and control; it is not a treatment for shoulder pain.

[Open exercise reference](#)

1. Face a wall with forearms resting lightly against it, elbows below shoulder height.

2. Slide upward only through a comfortable range while keeping your trunk quiet.

3. Lower slowly. Do not force your arms overhead or push into pain.

Easier: Use a shorter comfortable range. Ask your coach for another option if this is uncomfortable.

Breathe: Keep breathing comfortably as your arms slide.

Quick chair rise



1. Start

2. Move / hold

"Stand promptly. Sit softly."

Introduces quick force production on land. It does not reproduce the catch or leg-to-paddle connection.

[Open exercise reference](#)

1. After coach review and your warm-up, sit lightly on a stable chair against a wall. Plant both feet.

2. Stand promptly and smoothly, without jumping. Use bodyweight only.

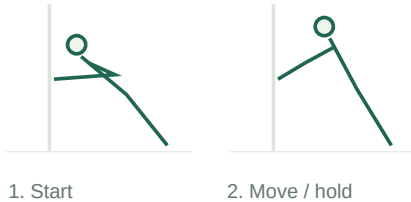
3. Sit back slowly. Reset between repetitions. End the set as soon as speed, balance or control drops.

Easier: Use a higher stable seat or practise a normal controlled sit-to-stand with your coach before faster work.

Breathe: Breathe out as you stand; breathe in as you return slowly.

Movement reference

Quick wall press



"Press promptly. Return slowly."

Introduces quick pressing intent. Top-hand timing is coached on the water.

[Open exercise reference](#)

1. After coach review, place your hands on a fixed wall and step back into a comfortable incline. Keep hands in contact throughout.
2. Lower with control, then press away promptly as one straight line. Do not launch your hands off the wall.
3. Reset between repetitions. Stop as soon as speed or alignment drops.

Easier: Stand closer to the wall. Learn normal controlled wall push-ups before practising faster presses.

Breathe: Breathe out as you press; breathe in as you lower slowly.

Use the live portal for your personal targets

Open a movement for breathing cues, common mistakes, easier options and external references. Illustrations are schematic positions; they do not show exact joint angles or movement speed.

Research and scope

[ACSM 2026 resistance training guidance](#)

[Dragon boat study: 42 male college athletes / 8 weeks](#)

- The 28-week sequence and specific exercise doses are coaching choices. This exact program has not been validated as a complete research protocol.
- Exercise references open from each movement card. Quick chair rises and wall presses link to the controlled NHS base exercises; quick variations need coach review.