



Safety sheet: Clothing

Rowing is an outdoor sport which leaves you at the mercy of the elements. If you don't get your clothing right, the least problems you have will be discomfort, cold, getting wet and miserable. At the very worst, improper clothes can contribute to hypothermia, sunstroke and drowning.

This guide has been written from a novices perspective. Experienced rowers are expected to have both prior knowledge and specialist kit at their disposal. If you have any questions about the suitability of particular clothing, discuss it with your coach.

Michaelmas:

So as a novice taking up rowing for the 1st time you ought to give some thought to what you should be wearing. Obviously we don't expect people to go out and buy expensive specialist clothing before they find out if they enjoy the sport – but taking these simple steps and sorting out your wardrobe before you get on the water can lead to a much more enjoyable, warmer, drier and importantly safer introduction to rowing.

Have a look at your wardrobe, think:

Layers: It is air trapped between layers that helps insulate the body. Don't be afraid to go out in more than 3 layers!

Cover: Long sleeves and long (non baggy) tracksuit trouser and sports socks are all good at minimising exposure of skin to cold winds.

Light & tight: Baggy clothes are a no-no. They represent both a drowning hazard and can get caught in the runners or cause you to catch your blade handle in them.

Water proof: If you have a water proof layer, this can be invaluable as an outside layer to keep you dry.

Hats: You loose a lot of heat from your head. Woolly hats can keep you much more cosy

Ideas:

Tight long sleeve t-shirts. Sports tops such as rugby or football tops may be appropriate.

Vests or T-shirts as under layers,

Tight tracksuit bottoms, (tights can give extra warmth for the ladies)

Long sports socks as worn in rugby, football etc,

Waterproof jackets as worn by cyclists.

Woolly hats.

What isn't acceptable:

Denim – it restricts movement and gets very heavy when wet.

Baggy anything – top or trousers - they will get caught in the slide. This will ruin the trousers and impede your rowing.

Single layers – Michaelmas will always be cold. Remember you can always remove layers as you warm up during an outing and store them in the dry hull compartments. If you get cold during an outing you can't magic equipment from your wardrobe.

Always ensure you have warm clothes to change in to after an outing.

Hillary:

In Hillary the temperatures can still be very very cold, and the advice of Michaelmas still applies. The only difference is you may by now have purchased specialist clothing, such as leggings, "tech" tops, splash jackets, gillnets and more. (Don't worry if these names mean nothing to you at the moment- they are part of the rowing lingo you can learn later!) Whilst these clothes are not compulsory purchases they will keep you warmer and drier for longer whilst allowing you to row more effectively.

Don't be deceived by warm and sunny weather, always take kit for rain and wind as British weather can change at the drop of a hat.

Trinity:

Sometime just lycra and a top are appropriate on a Summers day, at other times you will want your full winter kit. Have an idea of what the weather forecast is and plan accordingly. Remember that summer poses a risk of heat stroke. Baseball caps can dramatically cut this risk. Suncream is also essential as it is much easier to burn on the water than on land.

Rowing at Pembroke is an all year sport. Appropriate kit varies term by term but the peculiarities of British weather means it is always wise to be prepared for the worst. Kit is no good in your wardrobe!

Pembroke College Boat Club Safety Officer 2006