



Don't get too cross

***We are what we repeatedly do.
Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.***
Aristotle

An interesting piece of information that came out of the Hong Kong dragon boat racing crew in 1996 was that, whereas most of the crew were reporting 5 - 6 training sessions a week during their preparation, of those sessions only about a quarter of the crew were managing more than 2 - 3 sport specific sessions.

To be a fast runner you must run a lot.
To be a fast paddler you must paddle a lot!

Although the principle of cross training can help development, no-one disputes that as a priority your training must closely resemble what you have to do in competition. To help you identify how specific your training is, we've devised a unit training system which scores each session according to how relevant we feel it is to dragon boating.

Suggested activities are:

Unit	Score
* Structured paddling session in small boats or dragon boat	10
* Upper body strength training session	10
* Upper body endurance circuit	9
* Structured paddling machine session	9
* Nordic skiing (machine or snow)	6
* Rowing ergo	6
* Rowing	5
* High wind windsurfing	4
* Swimming	4
* Mountain biking	3
* Step/aerobic sessions etc	3
* Running	2
* Cycling (ergo or road)	1

Next step... how many units to do

The realistic maximum number of sport specific sessions the average club paddler could achieve per week is 6, which gives a score of 60 units.

Working down from this, 40 or over should show significant improvements.

30 is about the minimum to show any improvement and below 20 would be considered recreational training (or you could be a very good runner).

Two important points here:

1 All the sessions must be structured to be of benefit (ask the coaches if you need advice or structures).

2 It's not possible to store fitness; you must use it or lose it. Doing 100 units in one week and then nothing for a fortnight will not work!

John Griffiths was a C2 wild water racer before becoming a coach for the British dragon boat racing team at the time this policy was proposed in 1997. Since then he has been the coach for the world's most successful Paralympic canoe team.