

Rowing

Merit Badge Workbook

Merit badges are earned by doing: reading the pamphlet, practicing the skills, and showing your counselor what you have learned.
This workbook gives you a place to organize your notes and track your progress along the way.
Merit badge counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbook.
You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.
Use the space under each requirement to note what you have done and what you want to talk about, not to write out full answers.
When a requirement says discuss, show, tell, explain, or demonstrate, that is what you must do.
No one may add to or subtract from the official requirements found on scouting.org (Guide to Advancement 7.0.4.8).
Scouting America last updated this badge's requirements page on February 18, 2026.
Requirements change from time to time. Double-check scouting.org before you start.

Scout's name: _____ Unit: _____ Date started: _____

Counselor's name: _____ Phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Links marked "Scouting America resources" are the ones Scouting America shares on its official badge page.
This workbook is unofficial and not endorsed by Scouting America.

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1. Do the following:

(a) Explain to your counselor the most likely hazards you may encounter while participating in rowing activities, including weather- and water-related hazards, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, and respond to these hazards.

Scouting America resources: 5 Common Rowing Injuries and How To Prevent and Treat Them (video)
The Dangers of Cold Water Immersion (video) · How To Stay Safe When Paddling (video)

Rowing hazards (include weather and water hazards)

Hazard	How I anticipate and help prevent it	How I mitigate and respond to it

(b) Review prevention, symptoms, and first-aid treatment for the following injuries or illnesses that can occur while rowing: blisters, hypothermia, heat-related illnesses, dehydration, sunburn, sprains, and strains.

Scouting America resources: How To Prevent and Treat Blisters (website) · OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Campaign (video)
What Happens if You Don't Drink Enough Water? Signs of Dehydration + 4 Ways To Keep Hydrated (video)
Mayo Clinic Minute—Dangers of Heat-Related Illnesses (video) · What Causes Sunburns? (video) · Sprain or Strain: What To Do (video)

Injuries and illnesses while rowing

Injury or illness	Prevention	Symptoms	First aid
blisters			
hypothermia			
heat-related illnesses			
dehydration			
sunburn			
sprains			
strains			

(c) Review the Scouting America Safety Afloat policy. Explain to your counselor how this applies to rowing activities.

Scouting America resources: Safety Afloat (website)

Safety Afloat, and how it applies to rowing

Requirement 1 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

2. Before completing requirements 4, 5, 6, and 7, successfully complete the Scouting America swimmer test. Note: See the Swimming merit badge pamphlet for details about the Scouting America swimmer test.

Scouting America resources: Swimming Merit Badge Pamphlet (PDF)

Swimmer test passed on _____ Witnessed by _____

Requirement 2 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

3. Review the characteristics of life jackets most appropriate for rowing and why one must always be worn while rowing. Then demonstrate how to select and fit a life jacket.

Scouting America resources: How To Choose the Right Life Jacket (video)

Life jacket features best for rowing, and why one must always be worn

Date _____ Life jacket type and size I picked _____

Requirement 3 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

4. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** Alone or with a passenger, do the following in either a fixed-seat or sliding-seat rowboat:

(1) Launch.

Date _____ Fixed-seat or sliding-seat _____ Passenger, if any _____

(2) Row in a straight line for 100 yards. Stop, pivot, and return to the starting point.

Scouting America resources: How To Row Properly (video) · Rowing Technique: Mastering Oar Placement for Boat Speed (video)

Date _____ Notes on my rowing _____

(3) Backwater in a straight line for 25 yards. Make a turn underway and return to the starting point.

Date _____ Notes on my backwatering _____

(4) Land and moor or rack your craft.

Date _____ Moored or racked _____

(5) Tie the following mooring knots—clove hitch, roundturn with two half-hitches, bowline, Wellman's knot, and mooring hitch.

Scouting America resources: Essential Sailing Knots Tutorial: How To Tie Bowline, Reef Knot, Clove Hitch & More (video)
Mooring Hitch Knot | How To Tie a Mooring Hitch (video)

- ☐ Clove hitch
- ☐ Roundturn with two half-hitches
- ☐ Bowline
- ☐ Wellman's knot
- ☐ Mooring hitch

☐ **(b)** Participate as a rowing team member in a competitive rowing meet. The team may be sponsored by a school, club, or Scout unit. The meet must include competition between two or more teams with different sponsors. Complete at least 10 hours of team practice prior to the meet.

Meet _____ Date _____ My team's sponsor _____

Other teams and their sponsors _____

My team practice log (at least 10 hours before the meet)

Date	What we practiced	Hours

Requirement 4 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

5. Do ONE of the following:

☐ **(a)** In a fixed-seat rowboat, come alongside a pier and help a passenger into the boat. Pull away from the pier, change positions with your passenger, and demonstrate sculling over the stern or side. Resume your rowing position, return alongside the pier, and help your passenger out of the boat.

Date _____ Passenger _____

- ☐ Came alongside the pier and helped my passenger in
- ☐ Pulled away and changed positions
- ☐ Sculled over the stern or side
- ☐ Resumed rowing and returned alongside the pier
- ☐ Helped my passenger out

☐ **(b)** In a sliding-seat rowboat, come alongside a pier and, with your buddy assisting you, get out onto the pier. Help your buddy into the boat. Reverse roles with your buddy and repeat the procedure.

Date _____ Buddy _____

- ☐ I got out and helped my buddy in
- ☐ We reversed roles and repeated it

Requirement 5 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

6. Participate in a swamped boat drill including righting and stabilizing the craft, reboarding in deep water, and making headway. Tell why you should stay with a swamped boat.

Date _____ Where _____

- ☐ Righting and stabilizing the craft
- ☐ Reboarding in deep water
- ☐ Making headway

Why I should stay with a swamped boat

Requirement 6 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

7. Alone in a rowboat, push off from the shore or a pier. Row 20 yards to a swimmer. While giving instructions to the swimmer, pivot the boat so that the swimmer can hold on to the stern. Tow the swimmer to shore.

Scouting America resources: Row Rescue (video)

Date _____ Swimmer _____ Where _____

Requirement 7 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

8. Describe the following:

(a) Types of craft used in commercial, competitive, and recreational rowing

Scouting America resources: 8 Things to Know Before You Buy a Rowing Boat (video)

Kind of rowing	Types of craft
Commercial	
Competitive	
Recreational	

(b) Four common boatbuilding materials. Give some positive and negative points of each

Scouting America resources: Boat Building Basics: Fiberglass, Resin, Composites And Cores (website/videos)

Four boatbuilding materials

Material	Positive points	Negative points

(c) Types of oarlocks used in competitive and recreational rowing

Scouting America resources: Oars, Oarlocks, and Rowing (website)

Kind of rowing	Types of oarlocks
Competitive	
Recreational	

Requirement 8 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

9. Discuss the following:

(a) The advantage of feathering oars while rowing

Scouting America resources: Squaring and Feathering an Oar in Rowing (video)

Master the Perfect Rowing Technique: Feathering Explained (video)

Why feathering helps

(b) Precautions regarding strong winds and heavy waves, and boat-handling procedures in rough water and windstorms

Topic	What I would discuss
Precautions for strong winds and heavy waves	
Boat handling in rough water and windstorms	

(c) How to properly fit out and maintain a boat in season, and how to prepare and store a boat for winter

Scouting America resources: What Is the Proper Storage Method for a Rowboat? (website)

Topic	What I would discuss
Fitting out a boat	
Maintaining it in season	
Preparing and storing it for winter	

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(d) How to determine the proper length of oars

Scouting America resources: Oar Length and Adjustment (video)

How to find the right oar length

(e) The differences between fixed-seat and sliding-seat rowing

Fixed-seat and sliding-seat rowing compared

Fixed-seat rowing	Sliding-seat rowing

(f) The different meanings of the term sculling in fixed- and sliding-seat rowing

Kind of rowing	What sculling means
Fixed-seat	
Sliding-seat	

(g) The health benefits from rowing for exercise

Scouting America resources: Why Is Rowing Good for You? The Full-Body Benefits (website)
Scenic Rowing: Stunning Loch Lubnaig in Scotland (video)

Health benefits of rowing for exercise

Requirement 9 completed on _____ counselor initials _____

Counselor sign-off

Your counselor signs your blue card or approves the badge in Scoutbook, and your unit records it. This line is for your own records.

Counselor's signature _____ Date completed _____

Official Scouting America resources

Scouting America resources: Rowing merit badge page (requirements and resources) · Rowing merit badge pamphlet (free PDF)
All merit badges

Made by Cole at ScoutSmarts.com, an Eagle Scout who loves helping Scouts.
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