

## Three magic steps to get you through the first 2 sessions

Before we go afloat explain;

The position of the hands determines the balance of the boat.

Do not try to control the position of the blades relative to the water. In a rocking boat it is impossible to react quickly enough. The blades are designed to do it all for you. It is your job to let them.

On the water do say "Relax and let the blades float". Don't say "Put your blades on the water".

### Step 1 Rigger dippers

**All crew in safe position. Get 2 crew members to lift one blade handle. Stress – very slowly and gently and only about 4 inches! See what happens to the boat. Get the other 2 rowers to let their blades float on the water as the boat leans. Loose hands. RELAX – RELAX – RELAX shoulders and arms.**

### Step 2. Palm of the hand rowing

**Have rowers sit the boat in the safe position. Starting with stroke pair ask 2 rowers to square blades and let go. See where the blades float and explain that we want to let the blades stay at that depth throughout the drive. Now ask those 2 rowers to row very gently in slow motion BUT they are only allowed to have their hands in one of 2 positions. 1. Palm of the hand flat on the far side of the blade handle during the drive. 2. Palm of the hand flat on top of the blade handle to tap down and during recovery. They should not be able to interfere with the blade's natural and correct position in the water. Tell them to watch one blade and then the other as they row to see where it is floating. Ask them to gradually increase the grip to a normal relaxed loose rowing grip WITHOUT altering the blade depth. Repeat with the other 2 rowers.**

10 minutes spent on this exercise and you should have a level boat on the drive phase. The recovery is a different matter!

### Step 3. Skim rowing.

Some instructors think it best to leave feathering until session 3. I disagree. I find that most people pick it up quickly and teaching feathering in Session 2 allows us to progress to my Step 3 – skim rowing.

**Ask the rowers (in pairs) to skim their blades along the top of the water on the recovery. Feel how relaxed everything is especially the shoulders and arms when they don't need to worry about the position of the blade. After a while ask them to start to tap down to lift the blades of the water but only about 2 inches. Ask them to try to retain that lovely, relaxed feeling.**

With luck, you now have a boat that is level and balanced on both the drive and the recovery. The sky is now the limit.