

Shell Details

Shells like to be clean; a well-maintained shell does its job quietly. A clean shell is less likely to squeal or groan or resist a sculler's stroke. Grit or extensive wear of the oarlocks, corrosion of the pins and other worn components all affect the attitude of the shell and interfere with its connection to the rower. Let OWRC care for your shell so that, when you're out on the water, all you have to think about is your stroke! OWRC maintenance runs \$60.00/hour — ask a staff member for more details.



Dock etiquette

Shirwin Smith

A short reminder of the best way to handle yourself around a crowded boathouse and dock (and what other kind of boathouse is there?).

0. Before you start.

Be sure to leave all personal items of value either in your car or at the boathouse. Should your keys fall into the Bay, trying to fish them will be costly and is not always successful.

1. Oars down first.

Club boat or private, the order of things is to take your oars down to the water first, so that when you bring down the shell, you'll be ready to take off.

2. Be ready to go.

Like we just said, don't take your shell down to the dock until you are really ready to take off. Get all the things you need together first — adjust your footstretcher, get a bottle of water, use the restroom or make social engagements before you go to the dock.

3. Adjust footstretchers off the dock.

If you need to change the footstretcher setting of your boat but it's already in the water, push off from the dock and find a quiet piece of water out of the way of dock traffic. To make the adjustment, take feet out of footstretcher and put them to either side, resting on the deck or rigger (largely depends on what shell you're in). Feather oar blades, put oar handles under your arms and move seat up close to stretcher. Lean over oar handles and adjust stretcher; shell is kept stable while the oar handles are "trapped" under your arms, against your torso.

4. Come into the dock bow first.

It's usually easier and more efficient (you take less time and space trying to maneuver off the end of the dock) if you 'row' in bow first. The next rower can back off the dock and turn the shell in the water off to the side, out of the way of dock traffic.

5. Move slowly into and away from the dock.

You don't need speed when maneuvering near hard objects (other shells, pilings, moored boats). Use arms ONLY (no legs) when coming into or rowing away from the dock. Coming in, use pivot turns (put a square oar blade into water and back pressure on the handle) rather than taking extra strokes to turn the shell. Rowing into a turn speeds you up — not a good thing when maneuvering in tight quarters. A pivot turn will slow your shell and get you into position efficiently.

6. Shells AND oars get washed off, dried and put away.

Socks placed over the oarlocks help protect other boats as shells are moved into and out of the boathouse. Coiling the hose and placing chamois back in the bucket are a courtesy to other rowers and ensure boathouse safety. Club shells have specific addresses on each rack so be sure to find out where your boat is to be stored.