

# Fitness for Crewing a 505

Written by 505 sailor [Eric Anderson](#), photo by Ty Baird

*There's little doubt that strength and fitness are one of the many things that separate the front of the fleet from the rest of us. Sailing strength, and in particular crewing strength, requires a unique suite of abilities for which the typical Peloton or Zumba class might leave you shockingly ill prepared. One of the biggest adherents of good fitness is Eric Anderson, who's able to keep going strong through a long day of sailing. Here he shares his thoughts and the basic routine he follows in order to make his maneuvers strong all day long. Great advice, thanks for sharing Eric! (David Kirkpatrick)*

There are a lot of different opinions out there on the best way to physically prepare for dinghy sailing. When it comes to 505 crewing, here are a few of my own (non-professional) thoughts:

1) Injury Prevention: You can't sail if you're hurt, and it's easy to get hurt if you aren't strong. As a crew I'm most worried about hurting my core or back while on the wire or tweaking my shoulders swinging in and out. To prevent this I do a lot of banded shoulder exercises (rotator cuff extensions, I's/Y's/T's/W's, and standing/bent over rows), as well as core/stability (single leg RDL's, prone/side/back planks, supermans, bird-dogs, and single leg hamstring bridges). I stretch every morning and then rotate through a few of these exercises- it's a total of fifteen minutes each morning (including stretching) and I get through the full list about twice a week. I'm only using bands and bodyweight, so I usually don't break a sweat, and it feels more like part of starting my day than an actual workout. For me it's a great way to "sneak in the veggies." Of course, the weighted versions of these exercises often appear in my workouts, too.

2) Go sailing: As long as you're doing what you need to not get hurt, getting days on the water is a great way to build exactly the muscles you'll need while racing. Plus, you get better at sailing. Also, it's more fun. There's no point optimizing your fitness if you can't get the days on the water to make it worth it. One caveat: if you are sailing a ton (4+ days a week), you do need to add some real weight training to your injury prevention routine, as all your sailing will start building strength in an unbalanced way. In hiking dinghies/505 skippers this often includes deadlifts and other back exercises- your posterior chain is barely worked on the water compared to your quads and abs. For 505's I'd mostly be worried about my core and back getting weak while on the wire and would be adding weighted deadlifts + planks.

3) Arm Strength: I need arm strength to swing in and out on the wire, and I want to feel confident doing it on the last race of a windy event. I focus mostly on pulling muscles (biceps and back) and only do pushing exercises to balance out and prevent injury. The main movements are front/lateral dumbbell raises, bent over rows, and pull ups. I don't bench but will do push-up variants (foot-elevated, walkover, etc) to ensure my shoulders and pushing muscles don't get too weak.

4) Arm Power: This isn't about max arm strength but rather about how long you can operate at the intensity the boat requires. The bottom corners of the course are the most physically demanding of me- if we need to throw in two last jibes, douse (we have a crew douse), round the gate, and tack, arm fatigue shouldn't be the limiting factor. To train for this I try to do high repetition pulling exercises while near or at lactic threshold. For example, I'll do a 90-degree pullup iso hang until failure to get my arms burning and then immediately do as many inverted rows as fast as I can. Inverted rows are a lot easier than pull-ups, so you can go longer before failure. For me it's a good approximation of the last sixty seconds of gate mayhem.

Hope to see you out on the water! Or, if there's no wind, in the gym.

## Notes:

– I do several other types of workouts as well (running, rowing, HIIT training, leg strength), but they're more generic and less 505 specific. As long as I have the cardio I need for the boat I'm less fussy about how exactly I get it- mostly I do whatever feels fun that day.

– If the exercises discussed here aren't familiar to you, just google them. Most of them have modifications to make them easier/harder based on what's appropriate for you- also on Google.



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