

MY 2K PREP.

The sessions I did before every big 2K, with the timings.

2K erging was something I was always quite good at. After I broke six minutes for the first time, every 2K I did was under six. I broke 5:50 about ten times, and my PB is 5:45.

Going fast on a 2K comes down to two things. You have to have done the training. And you have to back yourself.

“Confidence can’t be faked, but it can be built.”

I built mine with specific 2K prep on the rowing machine, in the weeks and months leading up to a test. These were my favourite workouts. Every one you knock off gives you a smidgen more confidence.

Get your splits dialled in first

Decide your target 2K split first. Everything hangs off it. Plus 12 means 12 seconds slower than target for that 500.

Target split	+3	+6	+9	+12

SESSION 1 6 X 500M AT TARGET PACE

Work	Rest	Reps	Pace
500m	2 minutes	6	Your target 2K split

Practise your target pace. Not faster, not slower. Sit on it and find a rhythm where it feels sustainable. It’s not going to feel easy, but you want to feel that little bit of sustainability, that you can in fact do it. If you’re on the sixth piece and still holding on to those splits for dear life, that’s a big old confidence boost.

SESSION 2 3 X 2K ON A LADDER OF SPLITS

2K	First 500	Second 500	Third 500	Last 500
One	+12	+9	+6	+3
Two	+3	+6	+9	+12
Three	+9	+6	+3	Target

Rest between each 2K: 4 minutes.

The first 2K ladders down towards your target. The second does the reverse. On the third you go pretty nuts.

“That is gonna be fucking brutal and you just need to stay in it.”

You might not nail every split. Stay in it anyway. Even a whisper of “I’m doing more than I thought I was capable of” is confidence. If you don’t hit it the first time, come back next week and try again.

THE LEAD-UP

Do these in the weeks leading up to your test. They help you realise you can stay on your split and trust your body, your training and the process.

Session	When I did it in the lead-up
1 minute on, 7.5 off x 8	About three times in the lead-up. The last one at least 10 days out: it's a big, taxing session.
6 x 2K on the water	Part of 2K prep too, on the water.
3 x 2K ladder	About 10 days before the test.
6 x 500m at target pace	About a week before the test.

THE WARM-UP

The exact warm-up before my 5:45, on a Concept2. About 20 to 30 minutes. The fitter you are, the longer it takes.

Step	What you do
1	15 minutes steady, building through U3 into U2 (I was trying to hold 1:45 at U2). Bring the split down slowly over about 10 minutes, then lean on it a bit harder in the last five without maxing out.
2	Light paddle. Off the erg to stretch and box breathe: in for four, hold for four, out for four, hold for four.
3	Back on and ladder up at threshold pressure, rate 28 to 30: 30 seconds on, 30 off, 45 on, 45 off, 1 minute on, 1 minute off. Paddle it out for a few minutes.
4	One 3-minute piece at threshold pace, about your max 5K or 6K split plus a split or two. It should leave you a little panicked.
5	Paddle off for 5 minutes or so.
6	4 x 30 seconds on, 30 off: solid pressure at rate 32, then 34, then 36, then race pace (37 to 38 for me). Creep closer to your target split each time, with the last one right on it.
7	Optional: a 10-stroke burst right before you go in.

“Warm up on the split that you’re trying to hold.”

About 30 minutes in, you should be sweaty and warm, like you’ve already done a workout. Then roll onto the erg and knock out some numbers.

ON THE DAY

Before my big 2K tests I’d often be way too dialled up. You want to be excited and ready to go, but a little bit calm. If your heart rate’s too high for the work you’re doing, sit back and box breathe.

How I raced it: I negative split. My best 2K went 1:27, 1:27, 1:26, 1:25: get to the 1K feeling like you’ve got a bit more to give. That’s best for my physiology, but everyone’s different. Sometimes a flat split is best, and if you’re more sprint-orientated you can burst out of the first 500, pace the middle and bring it home hard.

Train smart. Build heavy, low-rate and max-effort work up gradually, keep it off back-to-back days, and hold strong positions. Stop and see a physio if you get rib or side pain on deep breaths, coughing or rolling over, back pain that travels down a leg, or pain that gets worse each session.

Send this to a Meataxe who needs to hear it.