



## Safety Alert - How to stay safe whilst rowing in the sun

It will soon be summer and we are looking forward to enjoying the weather but we should remember to protect ourselves. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the UK and there has been a particularly sharp rise in the number of cases since the 1970s.

Rowers spend a great deal of time outside. But the good news is that skin cancer is largely preventable and, with proper practices, can be detected early and successfully treated.

The sun can be strong in May but it may not appear so if the air is cold. In a clear sky the sun is as strong at the beginning of May as it will be at the beginning of August. People tend to be less careful about sun exposure when the weather is cold, this is a mistake.

Remember to protect yourself from the sun. If possible, avoid being outside between 11am and 3pm, or when the UV index is very high. If these times cannot be avoided, make use of shade and wear protective clothing, such as light, long sleeved shirts, hats, and sunglasses. If the shirt is brightly coloured then it will also make you more conspicuous.

Sunscreen can be used to supplement these. Choose one with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or above and a minimum 4-star ultraviolet A radiation (UVA) protection. Reapply sunscreen regularly to stay protected, especially if you're sweating or splashed with water. 'All-day' or 'extended-wear' sunscreens can be used but if you miss a piece of skin then this part of your skin could be exposed.

Although prevention is better than a cure, it's important to regularly check your skin for signs of skin cancer. You should be looking for:

- New skin lumps, spots, ulcers, scaly patches or moles that weren't there before
- Marks (including moles) on the skin that have changed shape, colour, texture or size
- Sores that do not heal
- Any areas on the skin that are itchy, painful or bleed

If in doubt, get it checked out by your GP.

This Safety Alert has been written in collaboration with the British Association of Dermatologists, who will run their annual Sun Awareness Week from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019. For more information please visit [www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk](http://www.skinhealthinfo.org.uk).

## Enjoy the sun but keep yourself safe.

Stephen Worley  
Honorary Rowing Safety Adviser  
[safety@britishrowing.org](mailto:safety@britishrowing.org)

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[This Safety Alert is a safety guidance document. Please read our safety message and disclaimer in RowSafe.](#)