

# Making Time for Activities Is a Win in the Long Run

Column by Michael K. Chung  
COLUMNIST

Ready all, row! Those famous words known among all rowers and coxswains say it all: rowing is the ultimate experience, and should be enjoyed by all.

When I was a freshman, I joined the men's lightweight novice crew. I had thought about it a little over the summer, and decided to try it out. Even though I had never run more than two miles at a time, I made it through the first day of practice, when we ran three miles, and through the successive weeks of practice.

During this time I realized for the first time what a team sport was. Practices were in the late afternoon, and were long, intense, painful, and exhausting. But since I was working out with dozens of other teammates, it was much easier to finish a practice. The team camaraderie was building, and everybody was pushing everybody else. We all knew that doing these workouts on our own was nearly impossible, so we relished working out in groups.

Crew is the ultimate team sport. Sure, I had played little league and on my high school tennis team, but neither of these could com-

pare to the crew experience. In crew, there is no such thing as the word "I." There are no opportunities to hit home runs, slam dunk a ball, score a touchdown, or slam the puck in the net. Instead, all members of the crew have the same function — to pull that oar as hard as they possibly can throughout the entire race. There are no breaks, there are no timeouts. There is virtually no individual glory in rowing — instead there is simply team glory. It is all for one and one for all.

As far as I can tell, the only opportunities for individual glory are in single sculls and the Crash-B Sprints — the world indoor rowing championships, held every year at MIT. Hundreds of rowers from around the world come to Rockwell Cage to row 2500 meters on a rowing ergometer.

As painful as crew is, it definitely promotes a healthier lifestyle. Obviously, the rower gets regular exercise, and a break from the everyday academics of MIT, but he usually starts eating healthier, too. And if a person rows on the men's varsity lightweight crew, or either of the women's varsity crews, he develops a better sleep cycle develops, since practices for these squads are at six-thirty in the

morning.

That's right — a better sleep schedule develops. In my own experience, I realized that I had to get enough sleep for the next day, and that meant doing my homework earlier, wasting less time, and getting to sleep earlier. It's a lot healthier if you go to bed and wake up on a consistent schedule. Okay, so you may not have as much fun, but believe me, you'll feel better.

The discipline, commitment, and pride of being an oarsman is truly great. I row for the total experience, which includes all of the aforementioned qualities. Although I thrive on competition in athletics, it is not as much of a personal emphasis for me. Obviously, many people on the crews are very competitive, and their spirit drives us all.

A special bonding and mutual respect builds within a crew. This was especially true my freshman year. About midway through my freshman year, I developed a love-hate relationship with crew — outside of crew I loved it for all of the reasons already mentioned. But during practice, the painful practices often made me wonder, "Why am I doing this?" I took a year and a half off, and started rowing

again last fall. I am definitely glad that I did. Much less of my time is wasted, and I am enjoying my time here at MIT much more.

Although I think that everyone should partake of the crew experience, I know that not everyone will. Nevertheless everyone should do some kind of activity — there are simply too many opportunities to pass up by just spending all of your hours studying and working.

People ask me, "How do you find time to do so many sports and activities?" The whole key is in the question: I don't find time, I make time. Last year I didn't play any sports or do any other activities except for a UROP during the spring term. This year I did crew, gymnastics, a UROP, among other things, and found that I studied at least as much this year as I did last year. The key is efficiency and time-management.

So that's my two cents worth. Find something to do and enjoy it. There are plenty of activities here at MIT, and as far as I can tell, they're pretty much open to every level of experience. You might think that you can't fit it in, but I bet that you can, and I'd be willing to hear about it.

Ready all, row!

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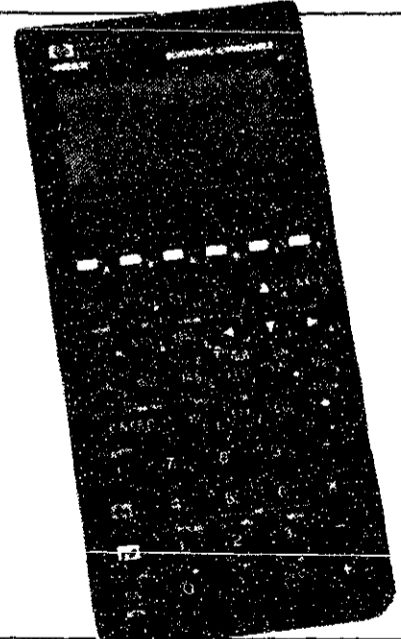
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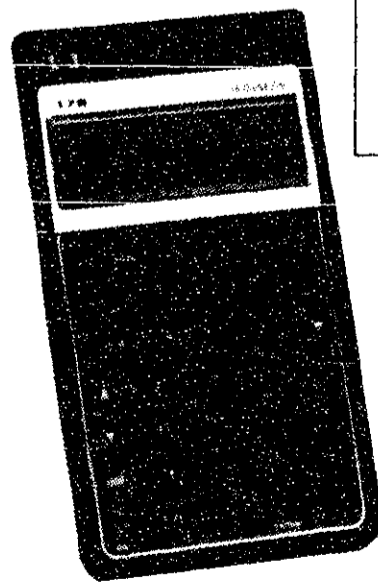
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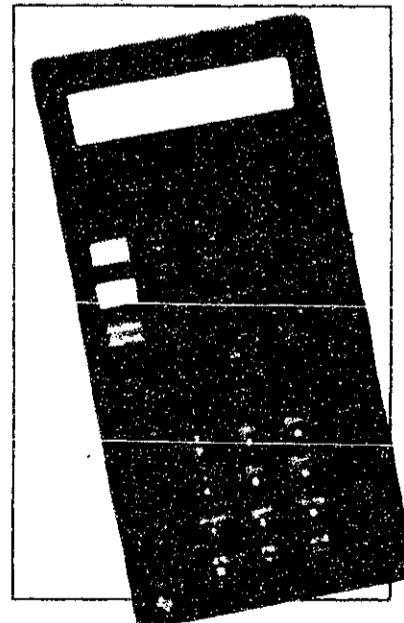
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