

Basic Kayak Skills

To introduce novices to paddling a kayak in calm sheltered water.

Rescue techniques at this level incorporate the use of a paddling partner. It is essential for all Basic Kayak certified paddlers to travel on the water with others who have also been trained in the techniques of assisted rescues.

Prerequisites	None
Course Length	8 hours minimum
Class Ratio	1 instructor : 6 participants
Minimum Staff & Certification	One Basic Kayak Instructor
Location	Enclosed and sheltered with easy landing options immediately present This course can be conducted in a pool Course Directors and Instructors must ensure that they or the host organization have secured any required permits and adequate insurance coverage to comply with on-water and on-land activity locations. See page 24 for more information
Conditions	Wind calm (< 8 knots) Sea state calm to rippled

Overview

Rescue Skills	Paddling Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wet exit retrieve a swamped kayak assisted rescue raft-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lifting and carrying a kayak forward and reverse paddling forward and reverse sweep strokes draw stroke low brace edging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> boat design boat outfitting clothing safety equipment paddles injury prevention equipment care kayaking resources heritage environment journeying and seamanship

Rescue Skills

Rescue skills concentrate on the safety of the individual paddler while paddling near shore with easy uninterrupted landing opportunities.

Wet exit — Capsize, tuck forward, reach around boat, bang side of boat three times, move hands back and forth along the hull, pull spray skirt cord, easily come out of the boat and surface comfortably. The paddler must show confidence and control.

Retrieve a swamped kayak — Participants should be able to swim out 25 metres to a swamped kayak and swim it back to shore.

Assisted rescue — In deep water, wet exit and re-enter the kayak with assistance from another paddler. The capsize must be natural with spray skirt in place. Rescue is complete when the excess water is removed from the cockpit, the swimmer is back in the boat, the spray-skirt is attached and the paddler has regained sufficient stability to paddle effectively. The participant will demonstrate as both swimmer and rescuer.

Raft up — Raft up in a group to form a stable platform.

Paddling Skills

Introduce an understanding of the essentials of maneuvering and control of the kayak. Successful completion of this course indicates competence to paddle a sea kayak along an enclosed and sheltered shore in the company of a partner with equal or greater skill.

- lift and carry the kayak in a safe and appropriate manner
- enter / exit the kayak, with the kayak in the water and out of the water (beach launch)
- forward and reverse strokes, both straight and sweep
- paddle forward 100 metres in a straight line
- paddle in reverse for 20 metres in a straight line

Sweep stroke — Use a sweep stroke to pivot turn in both directions.

Draw stroke — Use a draw stroke to move the kayak sideways 3 metres.

Low brace — Simulate a capsize and demonstrate proper low brace technique.

Edging — Paddle 5 metres forward with the kayak tilted on edge.

Knowledge

Participants will become familiar with

- parts of the kayak, different boat shapes and their effect on the kayak in the water.
- basic outfitting of a kayak for personal fit, control and safety.
- clothing appropriate for paddling in different water temperatures and weather conditions.
- the proper use of basic safety equipment required for kayaking.
- the diverse selection and attributes of various paddles.
- various warm-up procedures that can prevent common injuries
- proper care of the paddle, PFD and kayak.
- sources of information such as provincial paddling associations, books, videos, web sites, local clubs and outfitters.

Heritage — Discuss the legacy of Arctic peoples and their influence on modern sea kayaking.

Environment — Demonstrate, through discussion, an awareness of the potential for negative environmental impacts from sea kayaking.

Journeying and Seamanship

Developing good judgment is fundamental and should be encouraged at all levels. The participant in the *Basic Kayak* course engages in a guided exercise of judgment and decision-making prior to going out paddling. Typically this can be accomplished in 15 minutes. Concerns of judgment at this level provide more questions than answers. Because the participants lack practical experience, they must be advised to err on the side of considerable caution. Discussions related to journeying and seamanship need to focus on general patterns and accepted rules and emphasize the need for continued training and additional experience.

Navigation — Introduce participants to the fundamental concepts of time, distance, speed and direction as they pertain to the paddling environment. Charts or maps may be introduced as necessary to supplement observations of terrain and weather.

Participants should engage in a guided exercise to develop awareness of:

- their own abilities, and
- the present paddling conditions in the vicinity.

Participants should engage in a guided exercise to

- assess the local environment,
- access local weather information and forecast,
- identify other locations suitable for calm water paddling,
- determine personal needs,
- choose necessary equipment,
- prepare equipment for departure, and
- determine the need for a float plan.

Possible open-ended questions to stimulate discussion:

- Where does good judgment come from?
- What tools do we have to aid in our awareness of the environment?
- What senses do we have to help our judgment?
- Why do we need to be aware of our environment?
- What are the environmental conditions we can observe?
- What information is provided by our five senses?
- What psychological conditions are we experiencing?
- Are we prepared for what could happen in these waters?
- What resources are available to help with our decisions?
- How should we decide to go or stay?

Participants should be encouraged to consciously participate in these judgments every time they consider going out paddling.

Assessment

Activities focus on individual safety and comfortable paddling along a calm shoreline. While there is a great deal to learn at this level, the activities should concentrate on personal progress and an awareness of the need for future learning. Paddlers should leave the course encouraged to continue their learning and aware of their individual limitations.