

Introduction to Kayaking Skills Course

Aim

Introduction to Kayaking introduces the novice to paddling a kayak in calm sheltered water.

Rescue techniques at this level incorporate the use of a paddling partner and it is essential for all *Introduction to Kayaking* certified paddlers to travel on the water with others who have been trained in the techniques of assisted rescues.

Prerequisites

None.

Course length

8 hours minimum.

Class ratio

1 instructor: 6 participants.

Location

Enclosed and sheltered with easy landing options immediately present.
This course can be conducted in a pool.

Conditions

Wind calm (< 8 knots) Sea state calm to rippled.

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.

Overview

Rescue skills

- Wet Exit
- Retrieving a swamped kayak
- Assisted Rescue
- Rafting

Paddling skills

- Lifting and carrying a kayak.
- Forward and reverse paddling.
- Forward and reverse sweep strokes.
- Draw stroke
- Low brace

Knowledge

- Boat design
- Boat outfitting
- Clothing
- Safety Equipment
- Paddles
- Injury prevention
- Equipment care
- Kayaking resources

Rescue skills

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

Retrieving a swamped kayak

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

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.

Assisted Rescue

In deep water, wet-exit and re-enter the kayak with assistance from another paddler. The capsize must be natural with spray deck 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.

Rafting

Raft up in a group to form a stable platform.

Paddling skills

Introduce an understanding of the essentials of manoeuvring 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 more skilled partner.

- Lifting and carrying the kayak in a safe and appropriate manner.
- Entering / Exiting the kayak, with the kayak in the water, with the kayak out of the water (beach launch).

Forward and reverse strokes

Paddle forward 100 meters in a straight line.

Paddle in reverse for 20 meters 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 meters forward with the kayak tilted on edge.

Knowledge

Participants should be 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.
- Different warm-up procedures that can prevent common injuries
- Proper care of the paddle, PFD and kayak.

Kayaking resources

Be aware of sources of information such as: Provincial Paddling Associations, books, videos, web sites, local clubs and outfitters.

Journeying and Seamanship

Developing good judgment is fundamental and should be encouraged at all levels. The participant in the Introduction to Kayaking course engage 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 and because the participant's lack of 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, accepted rules and emphasize the need for continued training and additional experience.

Navigation

Participants should be introduced to the fundamental concepts of time, distance, speed and direction as it pertains to their 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.
- The present paddling conditions in the near 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.
- Determine the need for a Paddling Plan.

Possible open ended questions to stimulate discussion:

- Where does good judgment come from?
- What tools do we have available 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 5 senses?
- What are the psychological conditions we are 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.

Heritage

Discuss the legacy of arctic peoples on modern sea kayaking.

Environment

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