

# Anybody Can Kayak!

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## Caution !

Kayaking is a wonderful sport. It is one of the reasons for our existence. However, there are risks. Every year people die while kayaking. Yes, people also slip and fall in their bathtubs, but we think kayaking is more dangerous. Kayak only if you are willing to accept the risk of injury or death.

Kayaking is physically demanding. You need cardiovascular fitness, firm muscles, and good joints. You especially need good shoulders. Talk to your doctor to see if kayaking is right for you.

Once you've learned to roll, it doesn't make you invincible. You must avoid strainers, sieves, low head dams, undercut rocks, and a variety of other hazards. We strongly suggest you take courses and watch videos in river running and swiftwater rescue.

Of course you must exercise caution and judgement. For example:

In the beginning, kayak with safe, experienced boaters.

Only kayak on rivers within your ability.

Never kayak after consuming alcohol or drugs.

Follow the safety warnings presented throughout the video.

The safest, fastest way to learn to roll is with a skilled, successful instructor. We strongly encourage you to take a lesson and use this video as a refresher or practice aid.

And finally, safety isn't a list. Keep your eyes open and use your head. And don't kayak if you aren't willing to accept the risk.

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## Introduction

Feel free to print out these notes and take them to the pool, lake, or river to help remember key points and drills.

## Equipment

Ideally you want:

- Warm water
- Water about waist deep
- Clear water
- A tight fitting boat
- Goggles
- PFD

## Wet Exit

- Lean forward to protect your face.
  - Put your paddle in your armpit.
  - Pull the grab loop on the spray skirt.
  - Grab the sides of the cockpit with both hands.
  - Push your butt out, then your legs in a forward summersault motion.
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## The First Roll

### Snaps

- Keep your head down and eyes on your paddle.
- Roll the boat with your hips and knees.
- The instructor doesn't help the student get the boat up unless the head is down.

### Snaps with paddle

- Some students do best if they stay neutral in the boat. Others do best leaning back.
- The instructor should have one hand on the paddle and one hand on the boat. The arm holding the boat should be straight so the paddler has room to move.

### Finding home base,

- Reach forward, down, and to the side of boat.
- Look at the name sticker on the side of boat.
- The front paddle blade should be rotated flat to the surface of the water,

### Rolling

- Regain home base under water, seeing the name sticker on the side of boat. Reach upward so the paddle is above water. Make sure the paddle blade is flat to the surface of the water.
  - Sweep the paddle back to T position, keeping the blade flat and near the surface.
  - Snap your hips and knees.
  - Keep your head down and eyes on the paddle until boat is completely up.
  - The instructor starts out controlling the paddle, then gradually relinquishes control. The instructor should pound on the boat to remind the student to snap.
  - Move through drills quickly to avoid fatigue, getting cold, and overthinking.
  - After a few successful rolls the student should try closing their eyes to get a better feel for the roll.
  - After a few successful rolls, the student should go around 360 degrees.
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## Common Problems to watch for

- Lifting the head.
- Pulling down, or down and across, rather than sweeping.
- Losing home base once tipped. Not seeing the name sticker, not raising the paddle above the water, and not holding the paddle blade flat relative to the surface of the water.
- Moving the top hand out away from the boat during the snap.
- Holding the paddle blade at the wrong angle such that it slices it's way down into the water.

## Less Common Problems to watch for.

- Body is stiff or seized up during snaps.
- Continuing an exaggerated sweep during the snap such that the paddle rotates back and off the boat.
- Reaching too far out and off to the side during the snap.
- Rotating the wrists such that the paddle cuts downward during the snap.
- Starting the sweep before the boat is fully tipped over.
- Starting the sweep with the paddle already below the surface of the water.
- Stopping the sweep too early and snapping before the paddle is in T position.
- Snapping too late, when the paddle is past T position.
- Using too much speed and muscle.

## Limits to Rolling

- Fear
  - Fatigue
  - Freezing
  - Overthinking
  - Discouragement
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## Disorientation Drills

- #1 Tip over without your paddle. The instructor then hands you your paddle.
  - #2 Tip over with only one hand on the paddle.
  - #3 Tip over, then count to 5 before rolling up.
  - #4 Tip over, then count to 10 before rolling up.
  - #5 Tip over with the paddle held crosswise, in normal paddling position.
  - #6 Tip over with the paddle held crosswise, up high.
  - #7 The instructor shakes the boat to simulate current.
  - #8 The instructor shakes the boat harder to simulate more current or a hole.
  - #9 Paddle hard, then tip, which is another way to simulate current.
  - #10 Tip over, then move the paddle up over the boat before rolling.
  - #11 The instructor quickly and violently flips the boat.
  - #12 Roll up, then flip right back over.
  - #13 The instructor forces you to brace several times before being forced to roll.
  - #14 The instructor throws the boat forward.
  - #15 The instructor throws the boat backward.
  - #16 Roll up, then the instructor tips you right back over.
  - #17 The instructor holds you down while you try to roll up. (but not too much)
  - #18 Roll up in shallower and shallower water.
  - #19 Pop your spray skirt and roll up, then again, and again.
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## River Drills

#1 Roll in the eddy.

#2 Tip over and count to five before rolling up. Look around to see what's down there.

#3 Roll in the current while having an instructor hold you from an eddy.

#4 Tip in the current with an instructor holding you from an eddy, count to 5, then roll up. Look around to see what's down there.

#5 Have an instructor push you out into the current from an eddy while holding you with a short piece of rope or webbing, then roll. The rope should be no longer than 8 feet. The instructor should control the rope so that it can't wrap itself around you. Before going into the current, make sure the instructor can pull you up the eddy and flip you, and that they have good footing.

#6 Have an instructor bonk you on the shoulder and then on the head with a rock moving about the speed of the current.

#7 Learn an eskimo rescue or T rescue.

#8 Paddle into the current and tip when the instructor yells "now".

#9 Paddle into the current, tip and count to 5, then 10 before rolling up. Look around and see what's down there.

#10 Tip in the current with paddle in T position.

#11 Tip in the current with one hand on the paddle.

#12 Roll in the current, then tip and roll a second time.

#13 Tip over and try to miss a roll, then roll up on your second attempt.

#14 Tip over and roll up on the eddy line.

#15 Tip over and roll with your paddle facing upstream.

#16 Tip and roll in progressively stronger current and waves.

#17 Play in a wave or hole.

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## Roll Variations

### 180 back deck roll

Begin by leaning back and to the side. Once tipped over, sweep the paddle forward into T position, then snap your hips. Keep your head down and eyes on the paddle as the boat comes up. Keep your arms bent and relatively close to the boat.

### 360 back deck roll

In shallow water, roll over and bring the boat over the top of you. In deeper water repeat the same motion with the paddle. Start with your wrists cocked such that the paddle surfaces are facing down into the water. Skim the paddle blade along near the surface of the water. As you come up, keep your head down and eyes on the paddle. Keep your arms bent and relatively close to the boat.

### Lift roll

Start with your paddle and body deep in the water. Rotate your wrists so that your paddle can slice straight upward to the surface, directly into T position. Lift your head up to where you can see the name sticker on the side of your kayak. Rotate the paddle so that the power surface faces down, then snap your hips. Keep your head down and look at the paddle as you come up.

### Cold hard truth roll

Make a meager attempt at getting your head up to look at the kayak name sticker, then snap your hips.

## Principles of faster rolling

- Use the momentum of the flip.
  - Minimize setup time. If you're leaned back, start the roll leaning back. If you're forward, start the roll leaning forward.
  - Roll with the paddle on the downstream side in a hole or in a wavetrain.
  - Go with the flow. If your paddle is forward, sweep from front to back. If your paddle is back, sweep from back to front.
  - Keep your head down and eyes on the paddle.
  - Do some playboating. It is the fastest way to speed up your roll.
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