



# Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Stroke & Maneuvers Refinement Skills Course

## Skills Course Overview

This course is designed as a short program emphasizing safety, enjoyment, and skill development. The skills and knowledge gained through this course can set the stage for a lifetime of exploration, adventures, a healthy lifestyle, appreciation of water and the natural world, lasting memories with family and friends, and a rewarding experience for all - we paddle because it is fun.

If you're a student who would like a resource to prepare for this course, ACA is pleased to provide a free online paddling safety course, [here](#). A certificate of completion is included!

## Skills Course Prerequisites

- Acknowledgment of personal compliance with the [ACA Essential Eligibility Criteria \(EEC\)](#).
- No prior paddling experience or training is required to participate in this course

## Course Duration

The course duration should be adjusted to best fit the needs and goals of the participants. Up to 1 day (8 hours).

## Course Location / Accessible Venues

Lakes or coastal waters with potential areas of exposure to mild wind and wave conditions, with constant access to safe landing and within 1.5 nm from shore:

- 10 - 15 knot winds
- 1 - 2 foot waves (chop) (0.3 – 0.6 meters)
- 1 - 2 foot surf (0.3 – 0.6 meters)
- 1 - 2 knots of current

## **Course Size**

5 Participants : 1 Instructor; with an additional qualified assistant, the ratio can be 10 : 2. The maximum number of participants permitted is 10.

## **Instructor**

This course may be offered by Level 3: Coastal Kayaking (or higher) ACA Instructors, Instructor Trainers, or Instructor Trainer Educators.

## **Succeeding Courses**

- Level 3: Coastal Kayaking Assessment, Trip Leader, or Certification Course
- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Surf Zone, Tides & Currents, or Trip Leader Course

## **Course Outline**

The sequence of this course should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location, time allowance, and craft being used.

## **Introduction, Logistics, and Expectations**

- Welcome! We're so glad that you've chosen to further your paddling experience and education by attending this course! Let's review a few highlights about the ACA
- Let's talk about the course itinerary, expectations, and limitations
- Lay of the land (and water): the logistics of this venue

- Review liability waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, and medical disclosure
- Life jacket policy: always wear while on the water

## **Personal Preparation & Getting Started**

- Describe and follow safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, Leave No Trace ethics)
- Review elements of a float plan (who, what, when, where, filing practices)
- Discuss current weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards
  - Wind, water, weather, waves
  - Tides
  - Time of day
  - Venue accessibility
  - Boat traffic
  - Rocks, bridges, piers, dams, strainers, etc.
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Appropriately use communication (paddle, hand, and whistle) signals

## **Dynamics of Boat Control**

- Boat stability (trim, posture, rocking, balance, etc.)
- The pressurized bow and free stern
- Shaft and blade angles, catch and release points, the box, torso rotation and driving the foot pegs
- Edging to unlock the trailing keel
- Working with wind

## **Forward Stroke Refinement**

- Comfortable extension forward and maintain “paddler’s box”

- Hands at shoulder height and “in plane”
- Drive foot peg on the same side as the stroke
- Torso rotation (10 o’clock to 2 o’clock)
- Short stroke (in at feet out at hips)
- *Relatively* high shaft angle (depending on boat, anatomy, paddle length, etc.)

## **Sweep Stroke Refinement**

- Torso rotation (windup)
- Blade in at feet just below water
- In flat water, follow blade with eyes
- In rough water, look through turn
- Maintain box and drive with on-water peg
- Catch, release = bow to stern waterline
- More edge = less waterline
- Low shaft angle for maximum extension

## **Reverse Stroke Refinement**

**Method A.** Same initial set-up for propulsion, maneuvering, and emergency stops

- Maintain paddler’s box, rotate torso around spine, (don’t lean back), place back face flat on water, 45 degrees off keel line (will require that you edge the boat)
- Unwind torso while rotating wrist up & forward to keep back face loaded, blade just below surface
- To correct heading, hold edge longer and finish stroke further toward the bow
- Practice technique w/ reverse figure 8’s.

**Method B.** Different initial set-up for propulsion than for sweeps

- To propel or stop, position paddle parallel to the boat, back face down.
- Begin catch near 6 o’clock position and drive back face forward along the boat’s longitudinal axis

- To sweep, position paddle parallel to boat, back face out, blade near 6 o'clock position
- Drive back face out in an arc toward the bow, edging toward the on-water blade

### **Beam Draw Stroke Refinement (In-water Recovery)**

- Face your work (rotate torso)
- Anchor off-water arm across chest
- Sight over off-water wrist
- Control with on-water hand
- Extend shaft and pull power face to boat
- Blade deep in water
- Rotate wrist and slice away for re-set

### **Sculling Draw Refinement**

- Rotate torso to face your work
- Anchor both elbows and power with torso
- Vertical shaft
- Angle leading edge of blade slightly away
- Rotate wrist to change leading edge
- Short stokes (1-2 foot arc, 6-18 inches out) (0.3-0.6 meters, 15-45 cm)

### **Sculling For Support Refinement**

- From high brace position, power face down
- Flat shaft angle
- Blade at surface, slight climbing blade angle
- Control with on-water hand
- Torso over water

- Don't push down, create lift by pushing blade fore & aft with slightly high leading edge

## **Low Brace Refinement**

- Flat shaft angle
- Elbow over shaft
- Maintain reference grip
- Use back face to create “depth charge”
- Hip snap to recovery

## **High Brace Refinement**

- Flat shaft angle
- Elbow under shaft
- Slap power face on water
- Hip snap to recovery

## **Low and High Brace Turn Refinement**

- Establish hull speed
- Set up nose momentum with outside edge
- Transition quickly to inside edge
- Extend paddle blade and delay contact with the water
- Use back/power face with slightly climbing blade angle, and hold brace (do not jam forward until recovery)
- Recover with hip snap
- Transition to forward stroke

## **Bow Rudder Refinement**

- Establish hull speed
- Initiate turn (outside edge and sweep)

- Submerge blade just forward of pivot point (usually just forward of 3-9 line)
- Rotate wrist slightly to open leading edge and load power face
- Control with on-water hand and allow off-water hand to drop to a comfortable fulcrum position
- Don't over-expose power face
- Adjust as hull speed decreases

## **Stationary Draw (Hanging Draw, Side Slip) Refinement**

- Establish hull speed
- Rotate to face your work
- Maintain box and extend paddle away
- Slice blade from aft quarter forward into place at about the 3 or 9 position as you edge the boat away from the paddle
- Rotate on-water wrist to keep leading edge angled slightly outward, away from boat.
- Search for the sweet spot
  - Too far forward draws the bow
  - Too far aft draws the stern
- "Option B," transition from forward stroke to same blade placement and edge toward blade

## **Stern Rudder Refinement**

- Establish hull speed
- Blade in water at stern quarter, with back face away from boat
- Slight edge to outside of turn
- Load back face to turn toward blade
- Load power face to turn away

## **Videotaping of Strokes**

## Transfer to Classroom

### Video Playback & Analysis

*If timing and logistics allow, students may be given time to practice strokes again on-water*

### Feedback

Students will be given feedback on their ability to:

- Identify component parts of each stroke
- Perform each stroke by connecting component parts with smooth transition, fluidity and control

### Conclusion and Wrap Up

- This has been a great class! Let's talk through what we've learned with a group debrief and/or Individual feedback
- Course limitations: there is always more to learn, and the skills and concepts we discussed require more practice and experience
- First aid and CPR training is a very valuable tool and could make the difference between a "near miss" and an emergency requiring outside rescue / first responders
- Paddling is a lifetime sport - there are local organizations, clubs, events, competitions, and classes through which you can continue your learning and build community. Get connected!
- Handouts and reference materials (if applicable)

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This curriculum is managed by the ACA Coastal Kayaking Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).