



Level 2: Essentials of Prone River Paddling

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Essentials of Prone River Paddling** course is designed to teach beginner paddlers to safely and enjoyably paddle a prone kayak on gentle rivers.

Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC):

ACA courses are open to all individuals who acknowledge the ability to perform the following essential eligibility criteria.

1. Breathe independently (i.e., not require medical devices to sustain breathing)
2. Independently maintain sealed airway passages while under water
3. Independently hold head upright without neck / head support
4. Manage personal care independently or with assistance of a companion
5. Manage personal mobility independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance
6. Follow instructions and effectively communicate independently or with assistance of a companion
7. Independently turn from face-down to face-up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted life jacket*
8. Get on / off or in / out of a paddlecraft independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
9. Independently get out and from under a capsized paddlecraft*
10. Remount or reenter the paddlecraft following deep water capsize independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance*
11. Maintain a safe body position while attempting skills, activities and rescues listed in the appropriate Course Outline, and have the ability to recognize and identify to others when such efforts would be unsafe given your personal situation*

** To participate in adaptive programs, participants must acknowledge only the first six EEC listed above. Entry-level adaptive programs will involve teaching and practicing EEC #7-11.*

Course Prerequisites: None

Instructors: ACA Level 2: Essentials of Prone River Paddling Instructor (or higher)

Course Duration: 8 hours or more, at instructor's discretion

Course Location / Venue: Flat water and Rivers of no more than Class I difficulty

Class Ratio - 5 Students to 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the



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ratio can be 10:2

Succeeding courses: Level 3: Prone River Paddling

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Essentials of Prone River Paddling** course. The content covered and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

Course Content

Introduction, Expectations, & Logistics:

- Welcome, introductions, paperwork
- Student & instructor course expectations and limitations
- Course itinerary & site logistics
- Review waiver, assumption of risk, challenge by choice, medical disclosure
- About the ACA
- PFD policy (always wear on water)
- Appropriate personal behavior
- No alcohol / substance abuse
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

Personal Preparation:

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- Water comfort & confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)
- Judgment. In addition to learning hard skills, the importance of developing personal judgment and group responsibility increases on more difficult paddling venues.

Getting Started:

- Warm-up and stretching
- How to pick up a prone kayak safely: using suitcase, shoulder or head carry.
- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, straps
- Launching and landing
- Boarding, three points of contact, weight kept low, etc.
- Posture, safety, comfort, effectiveness, rocking, balance

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- Water comfort and confidence Remounting from the water: from the side and from the stern
- Basic Terminology
- Types of strokes: power, turning
- Stroke components: Reach, grab, release
- Safe and effective body usage

Equipment:

- Life Jackets (PFDs): types and fit. Special considerations for Prone Kayaking include having a PFD with a lower profile front.
- Prone kayaks: types, materials, parts (including safety features such as handles)
- Webbed Gloves: Different Models and functions of each. Neoprene, fingerless, hard hand paddles, bare hands.
- Care of equipment
- Personal equipment: water, food, shoes, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, whistle, knife, light
- Optional equipment and outfitting for particular needs

River Reading:

- Current speed, direction and changes caused by streambed features.
- Downstream V, identifying eddies and common river hazards

Safety & Rescue:

- Exercising judgment, safety as a state of mind.
- Principles of Rescue
 - Priorities: first people, then boats, finally other gear
 - Responsibilities of the victim
 - Responsibilities of the rescuers
 - Responsibilities of the group
- Types of Rescue
 - Self-Rescue
 - Boat assisted rescue, towing a tired swimmer who is separated from their prone kayak.
 - towing or bulldozing a capsized boat/ re-connecting boat with swimmer
 - Shoreline Rescue: Extension rescues, use of throw ropes/bags

Maneuvers:

- Secondary Stability: Paddling Boat on Edge. Using Superman position to identify and feel primary and secondary stability in flat water to be able to transition to moving water
- Paddling in a reasonably straight line using alternating sweep strokes and corrective rudders.
- Transitions from prone to seated and from prone to kneeling, and back to prone (in flat water)
- Spins using alternating sweep strokes to spin
- Stopping using reverse strokes
- Ferries: maintaining ferry angle using a combination of strokes and lean: demonstrating effective speed, angle and edge control for venue
- Eddy Turns: using lean and stroke timing to effectively travel into eddies.

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- Peel Outs: using lean and stroke timing to effectively enter the current in control

Strokes:

- Forward
 - Alternating Sweep Stroke
 - Double Handed Boof Stroke for punching through river features
- Back (stopping)
- Spins: right forward, left back, reverse
- Reverse Sweep
- Rudder: Steering from the Stern
- Superman Brace to avoid capsize and maintain stability and control

Rescues:

- Self-Rescue: Flip over and remount while in moving water.
- Swimming in current
- Assisted Rescue
- From shore
 - Extension
 - Rescue ropes
- From boat
 - flipping empty prone kayak/ directing to swimmer for self-rescue
 - assisted remount for tired swimmer

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR
- Importance of additional instruction, practice, experience
- Importance of appropriate level of safety & rescue training
- Demo advanced maneuvers
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards