



Kayak Rolling 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.

Course Objectives

- Learning proper boat fit and adjustment for effective rolling
- Learning safe and effective wet-exit technique
- Learning techniques for effectively rolling the kayak
- Learning proper body positioning and head placement for executing a roll
- Learning the mechanics of a roll

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. Half day (4 hours) or more.

Course Location / Accessible Venues

Flat water, protected from wind, waves, and outside boat traffic, with a firm bottom upon which to stand.

Course Size

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

Instructor

This kayak rolling skills course may be offered by:

- Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
- Level 4: Whitewater Kayaking Instructor (or higher)
- Level 2 or Level 3 Kayak Instructor with the Kayak Rolling Endorsement

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

Getting Started

- Describe and follow safe boating practices (behavior, substance abuse, on water and land etiquette, Leave No Trace ethics)

- Discuss current weather conditions, forecasts, and other environmental hazards (wind, water, weather, waves)
- Discuss importance of developing good judgment, group responsibility, management, and dynamics
- Warm up to reduce injury
- Evaluate individual's swimming ability, water comfort, and confidence prior to beginning the course
- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Review paddling terminology and care of gear (to be reviewed by the instructor):
 - Boat: parts, materials, sizing, outfitting adjustment
 - Paddle: parts, materials, sizing, hand position
 - How to hold the paddle in correct orientation and grip for effective paddling
 - Spray skirts: types and materials, grab loop
 - Life jacket: types, materials, fit
 - Helmet types and use
- Review proper techniques to safely lift and carry the boat on shore
- Appropriately use communication (paddle, hand, and whistle) signals

Intersection of Personal Environment and Course Environment

- Environment: underwater learning is challenging
- Physical limitations: flexibility, fatigue
- Emotional considerations: fear, frustration
- Cognitive concerns: information overload, confusion

Boat Fit and Adjustment

- Stretches focusing on hamstrings, forearms, wrists, neck, and body rotation
- Boat fit and adjustment
- Lower body boat control (emphasize points of contact)

- Hip snap demonstration, explanation, and dry land practice

Wet-Exit Demonstration and Practice

- Dry land wet-exit demo and practice (tuck, pound, pull, and push)
- Launching and landing: low dock, bank, or pool side to enter and exit safely
- On-water wet-exit practice (one-on-one supervision)

Roll Demonstration (*depends on type of roll being taught*)

- C to C roll or extended paddle roll
 - Breakdown into components: setup-sweep-hip snap
- Sweep Roll
 - Breakdown into components: 1) setup/start position, 2) finish position, 3) synchronized rotation of body and rotation of boat as the body and paddle move to the finish position

Hip Snap Development through Rescue Progression

- Demonstrate using whole-part-whole method
- Break bow rescue down into components and have students practice with a partner
- Emphasize hip snap development keeping head down
- Allow time for rest
- Provide constructive feedback

Roll Progression

- Hip snap refinement
 - Support student by holding hands on the on-side
 - Student rolls to a partially submerged position on the on-side
 - Student rolls away from the instructor (hands placed next to off-side knee)
- Set up position
 - Proper hand placement and indexing of paddle

- Student rolls to the on-side (instructor supports student by life jacket just above water surface and guides paddle from the set-up to the sweep position)
- Allow student to set-up and sweep on their own with your support
- Student rolls away from the instructor in the proper setup position (instructor awaits for paddle to surface and then helps guide paddle into proper sweep position and provides support for hip snap)
- Putting it all together
 - Guide paddle into position by lightly supporting the weeping blade ensuring proper blade angle and orientation
 - Minimally assist by standing at stern and twisting boat upright if needed
 - Revisit any previous step to further develop needed skills
 - Carefully observe students for fatigue and confusion
 - Encourage students to work with partners when they are awaiting their one-on-one time
 - Provide and encourage breaks

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 River Kayaking Committee. To connect with the leadership of this committee, please view the SEIC Committee rosters on [the ACA website](#).