



# Level 1: Introduction to Prone Paddling

## (Sample Skills Course)

**Course Overview:** The **Introduction to Prone Paddling** course is designed as a short program emphasizing safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for entry level individuals in the public, private and commercial setting.

Prone paddlecraft are boats designed to be piloted by a paddler using bare hands or hand paddles, who is lying in a prone position and who's torso and legs are supported by the boat. Although prone paddling techniques could be applied to other craft (e.g., SUPs, inflatable rafts...), prone paddlecraft are distinguished by design features whose purpose is to support the paddler and/or to enhance maneuverability.

### **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 1: Introduction to Prone Paddling Instructor (or higher)

**Course Duration:** 6 to 8 hours

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**Course Location / Venue:** Calm, flat water, protected from wind, waves and outside boat traffic, with no apparent current and within swimming distance of shore.

**Class Ratio** - 5 Students to 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10:2

## Succeeding courses:

Level 2: Essentials of Prone River Paddling Level

3: Prone River Paddling

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Introduction to Prone Kayaking** 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
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

### The Paddling Environment:

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

### Personal Preparation:

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- 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:

- Personal Equipment:
  - Prone Kayak: types & parts
  - Webbed Gloves: different types and benefits of each versus bare hands

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- Life jackets (PFDs): fit and regulations: design features that enhance comfort for prone paddling
- Appropriate clothing: comfortable / protective/dressing for being wet
- Care of equipment
- Additional Personal and Group Equipment:
  - extra gloves, sling, dry bags, maps, water, food, hat, eyeglass strap, whistle, foot protections, bug spray, sunscreen, first aid kit and location of equipment.
- Warm up to reduce injury: shoulder opening stretches, core stretching
- Prone Kayak carries: on head, on shoulder, suitcase carry, double carry
- Loading and unloading, racks, tie down
- Demo using straps or line and knots to secure craft to vehicle
- Launching/landing from land or docks: keeping weight low for maximum stability
- Prone Kayak Trim: situating correctly on the craft for maximum balance fore and aft
- Posture, rocking and balance
- Basic Terminology
- Outfitting
- Land & water etiquette

### Rescue

All participants are to be asked to demonstrate a controlled capsize and an appropriate self-rescue:

- Water comfort and confidence
- Controlled capsize / remount
- Deep water exit / re-entry: from side and from rear of prone kayak

### Maneuvers:

- Forward: boat goes forward in a reasonably straight line
- Spin: boat pivots in place
- Stopping: boat stops within a reasonable distance
- Transitioning from prone to seated and back to prone in a flatwater setting
- Mounting and dismounting prone kayak in shallow and deep water

### Strokes:

- Alternating Forward Stroke: thumb down sweep stroke rather than deep crawl stroke
- Back (stopping) and using hands to slow boat
- Alternating sweep stroke: forward right reverse left and vice versa for quick spinning
- Rudder: using alternate hand to help control direction
- Superman Position to avoid capsize

### 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: transitions to knees, multiple remounts and rolling
- Life sport / Paddling options

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- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards