



Coastal Kayak Open Water Skills

COURSE OVERVIEW: To refine and increase coastal kayaking skills for use in open water.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Participants will be introduced to:

- The “J-Lean” and its uses, including edge control for maneuvering and correcting course, balance, bracing, and overall boat control
- Refining the forward stroke and learning the side slip maneuver (static draw)
- Performing assisted and self rescues in open water
- Using compass to hold course and chart to fix location
- Bow angle method of avoiding collision
- Basic towing technique

PARTICIPANT QUALIFICATIONS: Basic Strokes and Rescues Course or equivalent experience

MINIMUM PERSONAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE CLASS:

Properly sized and outfitted kayak with front and rear flotation. Standard gear and safety equipment (paddles, PFDs, spray skirts, paddle floats, bilge pumps, and clothing appropriate for weather and immersion)

COURSE DURATION: One day

LOCATION: Ideal teaching conditions are a protected cove for launching and landing and working on J-leans, stroke review, and maneuvering, with quick access to more open water and/or variable conditions for practicing rescues and short open water crossings. Waves should not exceed 2 feet; winds should not exceed 15 knots. Groups must be kept within 1 mile from shore.

SUCCESSIVE COURSES:

The following is a general summary of course content. The content and sequence of instruction should be arranged to best fit the student’s needs, safety, the class location, and time allowance.

1) INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS (15 minutes)

- Enrollment/registration/liability
- Welcome and introductions
- Student and instructor expectations
- Course Itinerary

2) ONSHORE DISCUSSION (30 minutes)

- Discuss the importance of the J-lean and its many

uses. Explain why it is the single most important kayaking skill:

- Balance
- Edging (carving turns and correcting course)
- Bracing and rolling
- Control in wind and rough water
- Surfing
- Boat fit and adjustment
- Boat/body weld
- Foot brace adjustment
- Review wet exit (make sure everyone can and has performed one)

3) PRACTICE J-LEANS AND MANEUVERS (90 minutes)

Suggested exercises/progression:

- Tilt boat side-to-side, keeping upper torso steady
- Hold boat on edge, using balance; both sides
- Paddle forward, lift paddle, lean boat, allowing it to carve a turn
- Lean boat and hold on edge, while paddling forward
- Lean boat, initiate turn with one sweep stroke, and paddle forward continuing the turn, while holding boat on edge
- Practice sweep strokes with J-lean; lean boat toward working blade
- Paddle in a large circle, using J-lean and sweep strokes to maintain turn
- Paddle on a range (straight line), using sweep/lean corrective strokes to maintain course

5) REFINE FORWARD STROKE (30 minutes)

- Work on torso rotation
- Work on keeping power phase well forward with a short stroke
- Keep upper hand near eye level; do not drop upper hand toward deck

6) SIDE SLIP MANEUVER, USING STATIC DRAW (15-30 minutes)

- Start with sculling draw
- Introduce static draw position
- Practice using static draw while moving forward

7) LUNCH BREAK / PRESENTATIONS (60 minutes)

- Compass use in low visibility (safety heading)
- Chart Use to fix location
- Bow Angle Method of avoiding collision
- Brief on-land review of rescue technique



Coastal Kayak Open Water Skills

8) TOWING PROCEDURES (30 minutes)

- Basic towing demonstration and practice
- Standard one-on-one tow
- Push tow

9) PRACTICE RESCUES IN OPEN WATER (60 minutes)

- T-Rescue
- Self Rescue (Paddle float)

10) SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TOUR ON OPEN WATER

(60 minutes)

- Continue to develop efficient stroke technique
- Practice course corrections
- Practice using ranges
- Have fun

11) CONCLUSION/COURSE WRAP-UP (30 minutes)

- Deal with boats and gear, get in dry clothes
- Provide individual feedback, if possible
- Group debrief on how course went/ questions
- Explain what is next in the learning progression
- Further practice on the water is essential
- Course evaluation

REFERENCES:

General:

The Complete Sea Kayaker's Handbook
Andy Knapp, The Optimum Kayak
John Robison, Sea Kayaking Illustrated
David Seidman, The Essential Sea Kayaker

Safety/Rescue:

John Lull, Sea Kayaking Safety & Rescue
Schuman/Shriner, Sea Kayak Rescue

Navigation:

David Burch, Fundamentals of Kayak
Ray Killen, A Sea Kayakers Navigation Primer

NOTES: Feb 2006