



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION Coastal Kayak Traditional Skills

Course Overview: To have students become familiar with Inuit history, hunting implements, and the skills associated with Traditional paddling. This will include strokes, sculls, braces, and rolling techniques.

Course Objectives: Students will:

- Have a basic understanding of Arctic hunting techniques and tools.
- Have a general knowledge of Arctic kayak construction.
- Understand the theory behind a narrow-bladed paddle and its advantages and disadvantages.
- Learn strokes with a Traditional-style paddle, including the canted forward stroke and the sliding stroke.
- Work toward developing sculls, a balance brace and rolls.

Prerequisite(s): Completion of a Basic Coastal Kayak Course or ability to demonstrate proficiency and experience with wet exit, assisted, and self-rescues.

Minimum Personal Equipment for the Course:

Properly sized and outfitted kayak with front & rear floatation. Standard gear and safety equipment (traditional paddles, PFD's, spray skirts, paddle floats, bilge pumps, slings, and appropriate clothing for anticipated weather and immersion)

Course Duration: 1 Day (8 hours)

Course Location: To be determined. Choice spot would be calm water, minimal current, lunch and rest area, sandy or firm bottom on which to stand.

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

Welcome & Introduction (30 minutes)

Names, student backgrounds and levels of proficiency
Student and Instructor expectations
Equipment – importance of fit
Popularity of kayaking
Discuss different types of kayaks and paddles

History (20 minutes)

- Definition and different spellings of Kayak in literature (Kyak, Kyack, Kaiak, Kajak, Qajaq,
- Qaannat)
- Importance of the kayak for survival
- Kayaks and paddle evolution
- How rolls and sculls are based on survival techniques

Implements (30 minutes)

- Paddles: Double and single-bladed
- Throwing Stick or Norsaq
- Harpoon
- Tuilik
- Bladder bag, or avataq
- Rope coil rack
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Traditional Kayak Construction (30 minutes)

- Frames
- Size
- Skin

Narrow Blade Rationale (30 minutes)

- Describe how the paddle is customized to fit your body measurements
- Paddles used for centuries in severest conditions
- Describe how the wide blade paddle used today came into use
- Describe hydrodynamics and aerodynamics of narrow paddles
- Dispel the common belief that paddles are narrow and unfeathered because the Inuit could not make them otherwise
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of feathered vs. unfeathered blades
- Explain the philosophy of using the whole paddle for rolling, bracing and sculling
- Describe and demonstrate the canted and sliding strokes
- Describe and demonstrate bracing with the traditional paddle

Use of the Paddle (45 minutes)

- Taking advantage of Traditional-style paddle design:
- How to hold the paddle: hand placement and canted position
- How to slide hands to extend the paddle
- On-water: strokes with the Traditional-style paddle
- Sweep and reverse sweep
- Sculling draws
- High brace and Low brace, braced turns, sculling braces
- Canted forward stroke
- Sliding stroke
- Demonstrate single-bladed paddle use

Rescues (15 minutes)

Discussion and Demonstration of:

- Bow rescue
- Explain the philosophy of not coming out of the kayak and why

Workshop Practice (45 minutes)

Instructor Giving Rolling Exhibition (15 minutes)

Side Sculls and Balance Brace (60 minutes)

- Discussion and Workshop practice
- Explain that the side scull sets the stage for further progress
- Explain the importance of body position
- Demonstrate a sculling motion from a near-upright position
- Explain and demonstrate the, side scull and chest scull
- Explain and demonstrate the balance brace
- On water practice

Rolling Discussion (10 minutes)

- Emphasize the advantages of having a good rolling repertoire
- Describe the Greenland National Rolling Championship

Rolling Workshop (100 minutes)

Students with no roll

- Teach extended paddle sweep roll. (also known as Greenland standard roll)

Students with a basic roll

- Teach how to set up underwater when capsized from a no set-up position

Students with a good roll

- Teach any of the advanced rolls
- Some advanced rolls for consideration

Note: Names are not standardized

Aft-Leaning (“Layback”), or High Brace Based Rolls

- **Elbow Crook Roll:** Same as the Greenland standard roll, except forward arm is crooked underneath the paddle
- **Behind the Head Roll:** Paddle blade is held behind the head with one hand on loom and righted with the blade between the head and the rear deck
- **Under Arm Roll:** Roll is performed with the paddle held in one arm (tip tucked beside armpit)
- **Parallel Roll:** A one handed roll done by holding the paddle at mid shaft, capsizing, placing the paddle out to the side and rolling up using only one arm. Builds on balance brace
- **Avataq Roll:** Attach the avataq (or a paddle float) to the aft perimeter line on the side opposite capsize. Roll up against the float
- **Throwing Stick Roll:** A roll using only the Norsaq
- **Hand Roll:** A roll using only the hand
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Forward-Finishing, Low Brace Based Rolls: Palms stay oriented down (toward the kayak) throughout

- **Reverse Sweep Roll:** Builds on chest scull. Set up with paddle extended, torso twisted toward hands, far blade hooked behind opposite side of stern (beginners can leave far blade on the same side and capsize onto it) Capsize by falling backward, head hits the water first. Sweep from stern forward, rotating kayak upright. Palms stay down, finish as chest scull, leaning forward
- **Storm Roll:** Rear hand stays in contact with the boat at all times. Use a torso twist to sweep the paddle. Finish leaning forward. Palms stay down (toward boat) throughout the roll
- **Cross Arm Roll:** A storm roll with the arms crossed throughout the roll (Other options on rolls depending on what clients wish to learn)

Conclusion & Wrap-up (10 minutes)

- What we have learned
- Feedback to students and also to instructors

NOTES:

Equipment required or recommended:

- Properly outfitted and sized kayaks, preferably low volume, narrow, with low back deck.
- Proper safety gear (i.e. PFD, spray skirt, tuilik, akuilisaq)
- Greenland-style and other Traditional Arctic paddles
- Throwing Sticks
- Nose plugs

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