



AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING

Course Overview:

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

* This course is appropriate for all kayak craft, including traditional decked kayaks, inflatables and sit on tops. It is assumed the boats will be paddled solo. The instructor may want to limit this program to one type of craft but should announce this prior to the start of the course.

All course participants must be able to independently perform all skills/rescues in the course outline

Prerequisite: None

Course Duration: 6 to 8 hours

Location: Flatwater

Course Ratio: 1 Instructor to every 5 students (1:5) / 2:10 with an additional instructor or qualified assistant

Successive Courses: Essentials of Kayak Touring, Essentials of River Kayaking

The following is a general summary of course content for Introduction to Kayaking. The content and sequence of instruction should be arranged to best fit the students' needs, class location and time allowances.

Note: Use of sprayskirts is not part of the Introduction to Kayak Curriculum.

Introduction & Logistics

- Welcome
- Introduction of instructors and participants
- Logistics: Overview of the course with expectations and limitations. Sequence, class times, regrouping, alternate plans.
- Site specifics/procedures, including toilet facilities
- Waiver/Assumption of Risk/Medical Form
- Life Jackets (PFD) usage (wear at all times while on the water)
- Instructor inspects any participant-owned gear

Safety

- 3 Ws - wind, waves & weather,
- Local Environment; tide, current, traffic, etc
- Hypothermia: discussion on HELP, HUDDLE
- Regulations: Life jackets (PFDs), other equipment, litter, access, private property, etc.
- Alcohol/Chemical Substance abuse
- Signals

Getting Started:

- Personal Equipment:
 - Kayak: types & parts
 - Paddle: types, parts, length and hand position
 - Life jackets (PFDs): fit and regulations
 - Appropriate clothing: comfortable / protective
- Care of equipment
- Additional Personal and Group Equipment:
Extra paddle, bilge pump, sling, dry bags, maps, water, food, sponge, hat, eyeglass strap, whistle, foot protections, bug spray, sunscreen, first aid kit and location of equipment.
- Warm up to reduce injury
- Kayak carries
- Loading and unloading, racks, tie down
- Demo using straps or line and knots to secure craft to vehicle
- Launching/landing from land or docks
- Kayak Trim
- Posture, rocking and balance
- Basic Terminology
- Outfitting
- Land & water etiquette

Strokes

- Forward
- Back (stopping)
- Draw
- Sculling draw/brace
- Sweep (including Stern Draw)
- Reverse Sweep
- Rudder

Maneuvers

- Spin: boat pivots in place
- Abeam: boat moves sideways without headway
- Forward: boat goes forward in a reasonably straight line
- Stopping: boat stops within a reasonable distance

Rescue

All participants are to be asked to demonstrate a controlled capsize and an appropriate rescue.

- Water comfort and confidence
- Controlled capsize / wet exit
- Swim the boat to shore (short distance)
- Emptying a kayak
- Deep water exit / re-entry
- Assisted Rescues
 - Reenter & Pump
 - T / X-rescue
- Rescue Aides
 - Sling
 - Heel hook
 - Others

Conclusion / Wrap-up

- Wrap up
- Course limitations
- Need for further instruction, practice and experience
- Guidebooks and Videos
- Need for First Aid and CPR training
- Trip planning - 6P's: prior, proper planning prevents poor performance
- Lifesport/Paddling options
- Local paddling groups/clubs
- ACA Membership and Participation cards