



# Kayak Paddling Technique & Safety Tips Before Taking to the Water



**To Start** sit in your kayak.

Your backside should be all the way back in your seat and your knees comfortably bent.

**Hand Placement** on paddle as shown (right), with narrower hand grip for long distance paddling. Vary position to minimize fatigue.



**Basic Paddle Stroke** – Place the paddle blade in the water near your toes. Pull the paddle blade back alongside the boat to approximately your hip. Lift the paddle blade and take a stroke on the other side. Let your torso and legs do most of the work, and your arms and shoulders transmit the power. Double kayakers should be paddled in unison.



**Turning The Boat** – If the paddle blade drifts out to the side in an arc, it will force the bow of the boat to swing away from the paddle blade. This is called a sweep stroke and is used to turn the boat.

**Relax Your Hands When Paddling** – You don't need to hold a death grip! Sit with good posture, keep your torso vertical and choose a footrest position that allows your knees to be slightly bent. For greater efficiency, use not only your arms, but your torso and shoulders as well. Start out easy until you get the feel of the paddle and the steering strokes.



## Kayak Re-Entry

### Step 1

If the boat is upside down, reach across the bottom of the boat and grab the scupper holes.

Bring your knees up and onto the bottom of the boat. Lean back and the boat will roll over.



### Step 2

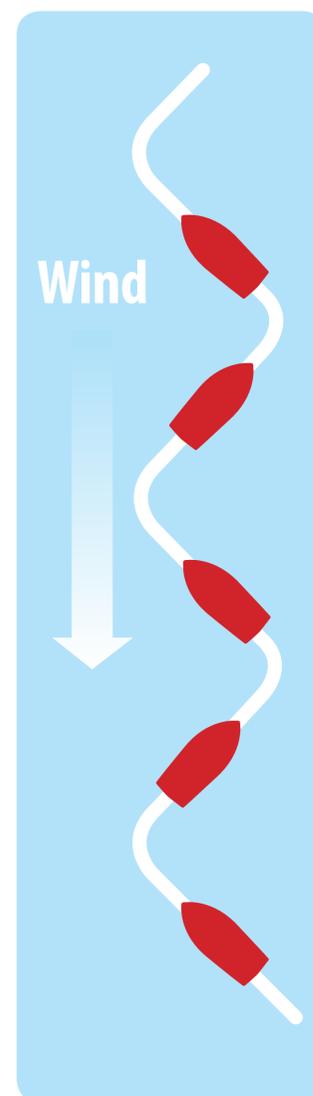
Position yourself so your head is near the cockpit area of the boat, facing the boat. Let your feet rise to the surface, floating on your bellybutton.

Reach across the boat to the far edge, then swim up onto the boat, with your bellybutton across the centerline of the boat (with your belly between the foot wells and the seat).



### Step 3

Roll over onto your backside, up into the seat. Sit up, swing your feet into the foot wells and you're ready to go.



## Wind

Going against the winds can be difficult and may leave you exhausted.

Against strong wind - tacking (zigzagging) into the wind will make it easier. Stay close to shore to minimize effects of wind.