



# Quickstart Your Kayak (Sample Skills Course)

**Course Overview:** The **Quickstart Your Kayak** workshop is a brief introduction to paddling a kayak. Students are presented with basic information on dressing to paddle safely and potential hazards and simple rescues. A minimal paddle skill set is presented and practiced, allowing students to safely and comfortably maneuver on still water.

## **Course Objectives:**

To make available a short program emphasizing safety, enjoyment and skill acquisition for entry level paddlers.

## **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 Kayak Instructor (or higher)



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**Course Duration:** Three hours or more at instructor's discretion

**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 : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

**Succeeding courses:**

- Level 1: Introduction to Kayaking
- Level 2: Essentials of River Kayaking
- Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Quickstart Your Kayak** course. The content covered and sequence of instruction should be adjusted to best fit the participant's needs, class location and time allowance.

*Note: Use of sprayskirts is not part of the QuickStart Your Kayak Curriculum*

**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
- Proper etiquette on & off the water
- Respect private property
- Practice Leave No Trace ethics

**The Paddling Environment:**

- Wind
- Waves
- Weather
- Water

**Personal Preparation:**

- Personal ability
- Swimming ability
- Water comfort & confidence
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up
- Safe paddle and 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.

**Safety & Rescue**

- Life jackets (PFD)
- Possible Hazards:
  - Current
  - Strainers
  - 3 W's- wind, waves, weather
- Cold Water Shock / Hypothermia-Help & Huddle, appropriate clothing
- Hyperthermia-hydrate often and early, appropriate clothing



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- Rescue:
  - Rescue Sequence: RETHROG
  - Rescue Priorities: people, boats, gear
- Demonstrate or Discuss:
  - Water confidence and comfort test
  - Effective rescue techniques
- Demo advanced maneuvers
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards

## Equipment

- Kayak: types, parts, materials
- Paddles: types, parts, hand positions, sizing

## Getting Started

- Car Topping: racks, tie downs, loading and unloading
- Kayak Carries
- Launching: from land or docks
- Trim
- Positions of paddle and posture
- Terminology: onside, offside, etc.

## Maneuvers

- Forward: Hull moves forward in a straight line.
- Forward Stopping: boat stops within a reasonable distance.
- Spin: (onside & offside) Hull pivots from standstill.
- Turn: Hull turns while underway
- Abeam: Hull moves sideways from standstill

## 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