

**North East Wisconsin Paddlers
Kayak Essentials Class – General Outline**



Course Overview: The Kayak Essentials Class 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 people interested in paddling all kayak craft, including traditional decked kayaks (whitewater, sea kayak, recreational), inflatables and sit-on-tops. The instructors will emphasize specific skills and techniques that are most appropriate for certain types of kayaks or paddling conditions in response to unique interests or preferences of the participating students.

Goals: The course is designed to help participants:

- Recall and apply the principals needed to have a safe day on the water
- Paddle in straight line; maneuver the kayak using appropriate basic strokes
- Outfit his/ her boat to comfortably fit their body
- Perform solo and assisted re-entry
- Dress appropriately for paddle conditions

It is our intent to help establish a foundation from which participants can confidently continue to develop skill outside of the class and experience the pleasures of the sport.

Prerequisite: None

Other Requirements: Appropriate swim gear for pool conditions; water socks if desired; ability to swim; nose clips will be offered at the class. Note that the pool temperature is maintained for competitive swimmers and might be cool. Polypropylene or neoprene tops and bottoms beneath swim shorts or bathing suits might be more comfortable for activity that involves climbing in and out of the kayaks.

Course Duration: 12 hours in four three-hour sessions; split between classroom and pool

Location: Classroom and pool locations will be posted in the host facility

Class Size: Limited by pool capacity; typically 12 – 15 students

Instructor Ratio: Certified (ACA or BCU) and assistant instructors to meet or exceed ACA guidelines

Successive Paddle

Opportunities: Open pool time, Rolls and Rescue class; NEWP Student Outing weekend (River and Coastal); Coastal Skills Workshops (See www.WisconsinPaddlers.org for details)

In addition, course instructors and fellow students will share information on paddling related events and activities scheduled for the coming year, including information on kayak swaps and sessions, organized paddles and local outdoor or paddling groups.

The following is a general summary of course content for the Kayak Skills class. The content and sequence of instruction will be arranged to best fit participant needs, class location and time allowances. Various video and YouTube clips, paddle gear and equipment and discussion are used to support the classroom instruction.

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Kayak Skills Class 1 - Classroom

1. Housekeeping
 - a. Waivers, student contact data, label helmets
 - b. Class logistics/ timing
 - c. Safety/ Lifeguard-in-Charge / Secure valuables
 - d. Physical condition concerns/ issues/ nose clips and jewelry
2. Student and Instructor Introductions
 - a. Paddling experience and interests
 - b. Own boats/ equipment? Type?
 - c. Hopes / expectations for this class?
3. Open Pools – Student Outing – www.NEWP.club
4. [Canoecopia](#) – March 13-15, 2020
5. [Types of kayaks](#)
6. Skirts – nylon vs. neoprene – fit, purpose, grab loop
7. J-lean and Wet Exit videos
8. Pool procedures

Kayak Skills Class 1 - Pool

1. Fit boats and helmets (label both)
2. Entry demo and enter boats (instructor assisted)
3. Raft up – wiggles and J-Leans
4. On-Water Demos
 - a. Demo wet exit and empty boats at side of pool
 - b. Demonstrate Eskimo bow rescue/ hip snap
5. Practice on/ in the water
 - a. Break into student/ instructor teams; progress to student wet exit (two times)
 - b. Pair students and practice bow recovery
 - c. Strokes – Forward and Reverse
6. Water games
7. Proper Wet Exit – hang on to paddle and boat

Supporting Materials

1. *One paddle, two skirts*
2. *Helmets for all students (duct tape and markers)*
3. *Online info at www.NEWP.club: Informational Links*
4. *Cold Water videos to view ([Cold Water Boot Camp 1-10-1](#); [Cold Water Boot Camp USA](#);)*

Kayak Skills Class 2 - Classroom

1. Re-introductions/questions/ feedback/ review
2. Paddles – types and anatomy
 - a. Whitewater/ Touring/ Greenland
 - b. Paddles– length – weight – blade shape – grip
 - c. Holding the paddle: paddler’s box, torso rotation
3. Lawry balance drill
4. Communication (paddle/ hand signals)
5. Group paddle coordination and navigation rules
6. How to Load Your Boat:
<https://youtu.be/XkZ29lepB80>
7. Paddle Strokes (dry stroke drill)
 - a. Sweeps - Forward and reverse
 - b. Forward and reverse strokes
 - c. Draws – out-of-water, in-water, sculling
 - d. Video Clips

Kayak Skills Class 2 - Pool

1. Find/ fit boats, skirts, paddles
2. Stretch exercise – paddle pass rotation and boat parts
3. Demo strokes (forward sweep, reverse sweep, out-of-water draw, in-water draw, sculling draw)
4. In water torso rotation exercise – Side paddle w/ doggie toys
5. Sweeps – extension, torso rotation, posture
6. Cowboy scramble
7. Draw strokes – out of water recovery; in water recovery; sculling
8. Review Session 1 Strokes (If time permits)
 - a. Forward stroke – down and back
 - b. Reverse stroke – down and back (stopping)
 - c. Proper Wet Exit

Supporting Materials

1. *Paddles for all students*
2. *Different PFDs (safety discussion)*
3. *Safety and communications gear*
4. *Exchange cold water videos*

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Kayak Skills Class 3 - Classroom

1. Re-introductions/questions/ feedback/ review
2. Safety gear – overview of usage and storage
 - a. PFDs
 - b. Boat re-entry and rescue - Pump, float, throw/ tow ropes, stirrup
3. Signal gear - Lights, flares, whistles, Marine radio, mirror, air horn, cell phone
4. Paddler courtesy and etiquette
 - a. Eddies and playspots
 - b. Designated swim areas
 - c. Trespassing
 - d. Litter (leave no trace)
 - e. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)
 - f. Fishermen, hunters and sailboats
 - g. Boat landing courtesy /changing bags
5. Braces – high and low
6. Rescues (solo – paddle float, assisted – T/ TX)

Kayak Skills Class 3 - Pool

1. Stretch exercise – paddle pass torso rotation
2. Demo rescues – out of boat solo with float and assisted (T/ TX or parallel with paddle)
3. Two or four people work on rescues in deep end
 - a. Rest of class works on braces - low and high
 - b. Sculling brace
 - c. Practice bracing
 - d. Bracing – low and high
 - e. Bracing turns and edging
4. Rotate all students – all students must participate in recovery/ re-entry
5. Proper Wet Exit

Supporting Materials

1. *Exchange cold water videos*

Kayak Skills Class 4 - Classroom

1. Re-introductions/questions/ feedback/ review
2. Hypothermia – Staying warm in kayak short video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNTYxR445y8>
 - a. Clothing – options for all conditions; dressing for the water
 - b. Eating and hydration
 - c. Hyperthermia
 - d. 22 Minute Video: **Cold, Wet and Alive** ([Part 1/](#) [Part 2](#))
3. Other Safety Issues
 - a. On water safety hazards – waves, current, strainers, rocks, low head dams
 - b. Weather (storms, wind, sun)
 - c. Personal fitness and health situations (hypoglycemia, bee sting, sun stroke)
4. Paddle networking options: [Canoecopia](#), Student Outing Weekends (River/ Coastal); [Door County Sea Kayak Symposium](#) (July); Public Paddle events; informal paddle groups

Kayak Skills Class 4 - Pool

1. Review rescues – out of boat solo with float and assisted (T/ TX or parallel with paddle)
2. Stretch exercise – paddle pass torso rotation
3. Four people work on rescues in deep end
 - a. Rest of class works on braces - low and high
 - b. Sculling brace
 - c. Practice bracing using straps
 - d. Bracing – low and high
 - e. Bracing turns and edging
4. Rotate all students – all students must participate in recovery/ re-entry
5. Individual requests and reviews
6. Proper Wet Exit

Supporting Materials

1. *Cold weather gear display/ walk-through*
2. *Evaluation Forms*

Video Notes: [Heel Hook - Kayak Rescue \(4:28\)](#); [Heel Hook Paddle Float Rescue \(Jeremy Vore - 7:16\)](#)

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