



Level 3: Coastal Kayak Strokes and Maneuvers Refinement

(Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Coastal Kayak Strokes and Maneuvers Refinement** course is designed to assist coastal kayakers at all levels in refining basic strokes and maneuvers. It may be beneficial to re-take this course at different levels of skill progression.

Course Objectives: Using on-water practice, classroom discussion and/or video analysis, participants will *practice* strokes/maneuvers *to increase* efficiency, fluidity and control.

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: Participation in Essentials of Kayak Touring, Basic Coastal Kayak, or equivalent



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Minimum Personal Equipment for the course:

Properly sized and outfitted sea kayaks with front and rear flotation and related paddling and safety equipment (i.e. paddles, PFDs, spray skirts, paddle floats, bilge pumps & wet suits if necessary).

Course Duration: 7-8 Hours

Course Location / Venue: Lakes or coastal waters with potential areas of exposure to mild wind and wave conditions, with constant access to safe landing and within 1.5 nm from shore:

- Winds less than 15 knots
- Waves (chop) less than 2 feet (0.6 meters)
- Surf less than 2 foot (0.6 meters)
- Current less than 2 knots

Class Ratio - 5 students : 1 Instructor; with an additional instructor or qualified assistant the ratio can be 10 : 2

Succeeding courses:

Level 4: Open Water Coastal Kayak
Surf Kayak
Tidal Skills
Rough Water

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

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 and confidence
- Wet exits in two ways: (1) utilizing the sprayskirt grab loop and (2) releasing the skirt off the hip
- Fitness, conditioning, and warm up



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- Safe paddle and boat handling
- Safety and rescue considerations
- Personal equipment (reviewed by Instructor)

Dry-land presentation

- The dynamics of boat control
- The pressurized bow and free stern
- Shaft and blade angles, catch and release points, the box, torso rotation and driving the foot pegs
- Edging to unlock the trailing keel
- Working with wind

On-water Presentations

Strokes:

Forward Stroke

- Comfortable extension forward and maintain box
- Hands at shoulder height and “in plane”
- Drive foot peg on the same side as the stroke
- Torso rotation (10 o’clock to 2 o’clock)
- Short stroke (in at feet out at hips)
- *Relatively* high shaft angle (depending on boat, anatomy, paddle length etc.)

Sweep Stroke

- Torso rotation (windup)
- Blade in at feet just below water
- In flat water, follow blade with eyes. In rough water, look through turn
- Maintain box & drive w/ on-water peg
- Catch, release = bow to stern waterline
- More edge = less waterline
- Low shaft angle for maximum extension

Reverse Strokes

(to propel, maneuver, stop)

Method A. Same initial set-up for propulsion, maneuvering and emergency stops

- Maintain paddler’s box, rotate torso around spine, (don’t lean back), place back face flat on water, 45 degrees off keel line (will require that you edge the boat)
- Unwind torso while rotating wrist up & forward to keep back face loaded, blade just below surface
- To correct heading, hold edge longer and finish stroke further toward the bow
- Practice technique w/ reverse figure 8’s.

Method B. Different initial set-up for propulsion than for sweeps

- To propel or stop, position paddle parallel to the boat, back face down.
- Begin catch near 6 O’clock position and drive back face forward along the boat’s longitudinal axis
- To sweep, position paddle parallel to boat, back face out, blade near 6 o’clock position
- Drive back face out in an arc toward the bow, edging toward the on-water blade

Beam Draw (In water recovery)

- Face your work (rotate torso)
- Anchor off-water arm across chest
- Sight over off-water wrist
- Control w/ on-water hand
- Extend shaft and pull power face to boat
- Blade deep in water
- Rotate wrist and slice away for re-set



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Sculling Draw

- Rotate torso to face your work
- Anchor both elbows and power with torso
- Vertical shaft
- Angle leading edge of blade slightly away
- Rotate wrist to change leading edge
- Short strokes (1-2 ft arc, 6-18 inches out)

Sculling for Support

- From high brace position, power face down
- Flat shaft angle
- Blade at surface, slight climbing blade angle
- Control w/ on-water hand
- Torso over water
- Don't push down, create lift by pushing blade fore & aft w/ slightly high leading edge

Braces

Low Brace

- Flat shaft angle
- Elbow over shaft
- Maintain reference grip
- Use back face to create "depth charge"
- Hip snap to recovery

High Brace

- Flat shaft angle
- Elbow under shaft
- Slap power face on water
- Hip snap to recovery

Maneuvers

Low/High Brace Turn

- Establish hull speed!
- Set up nose momentum with outside edge

- Transition quickly to inside edge
- Extend paddle blade and delay contact with the water
- Use back/power face with slightly climbing blade angle, and hold brace (do not jam forward until recovery)
- Recover with hip snap
- Transition to forward stroke

Bow Rudder

- Establish hull speed!
- Initiate turn (outside edge & sweep)
- Submerge blade just forward of pivot point (usually just forward of 3-9 line)
- Rotate wrist slightly to open leading edge and load power face
- Control with on-water hand and allow off-water hand to drop to a comfortable fulcrum position
- Don't over-expose power face
- Adjust as hull speed decreases

Stationary Draw

(Hanging Draw, Side Slip)

- Establish hull speed!
- Rotate to face your work
- Maintain box & extend paddle away
- Slice blade from aft quarter forward into place at about the 3 or 9 position as you edge the boat away from the paddle.
- Rotate on-water wrist to keep leading edge angled slightly outward, away from boat.
- Search for the sweet spot. Too far forward draws the bow. Too far aft draws the stern.
- Option "B", transition from forward stroke to same blade placement and edge toward blade

Stern Rudder

- Establish hull speed!



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- Blade in water at stern quarter, with back face away from boat
- Slight edge to outside of turn
- Load back face to turn toward blade
- Load power face to turn away

Videotaping of Strokes

Transfer to Classroom

Video Playback & Analysis (90 Minutes)
(If timing and logistics allow, students may be given time to practice strokes again on-water.)

Feedback

Students will be given feedback on their ability to:

- Identify component parts of each stroke
- Perform each stroke by connecting component parts with smooth transition, fluidity and control

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
- Demo advanced maneuver
- Life sport / Paddling options
- Local paddling groups / Clubs
- Handouts / Reference materials
- ACA Membership forms
- Course evaluation
- Participation cards