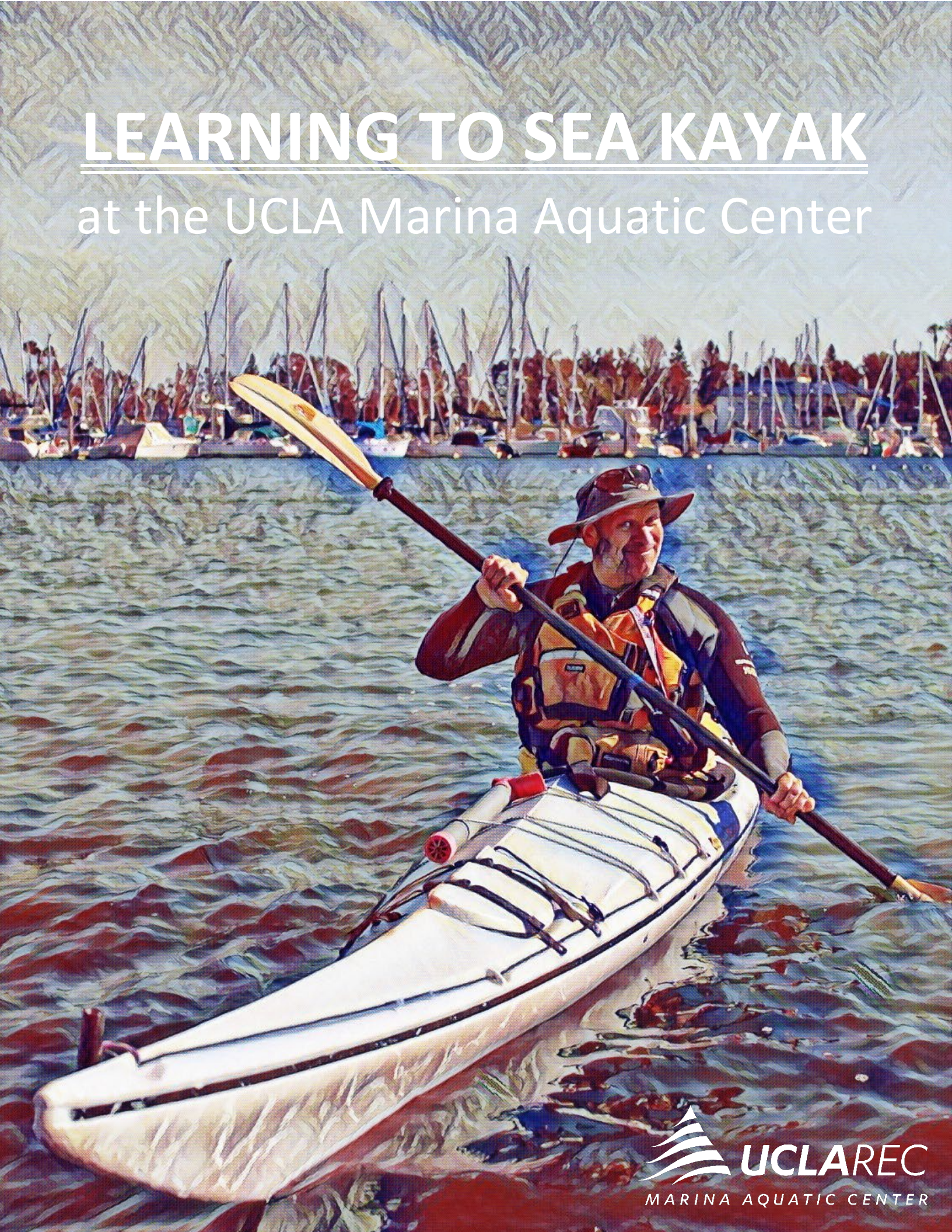
LEARNING TO SEA KAYAK

at the UCLA Marina Aquatic Center



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KAYAKING VOCABULARY TERMS

Aft: Toward the stern from the cockpit.

Bailer: A pump used to remove water from inside the cockpit.

Bearing: The direction to a landmark.

Blade: The flat part of the paddle used for propulsion.

Bow: The front end of a kayak.

Bracing: Technique used to stabilize a tipping kayak.

Beam Sea: Waves and swells coming at the side of the boat, usually more difficult to paddle in thanother boat angles to the wind.

Bulkhead: Foam wall fore or aft in a decked kayak primarily required for flotation but also used tocreate storage areas with access via deck hatches.

Coaming: The lip that surrounds the cockpit where the spray skirt attaches.

Cockpit: The opening in the kayak's deck where the paddler sits.

Course: The direction you want to go.

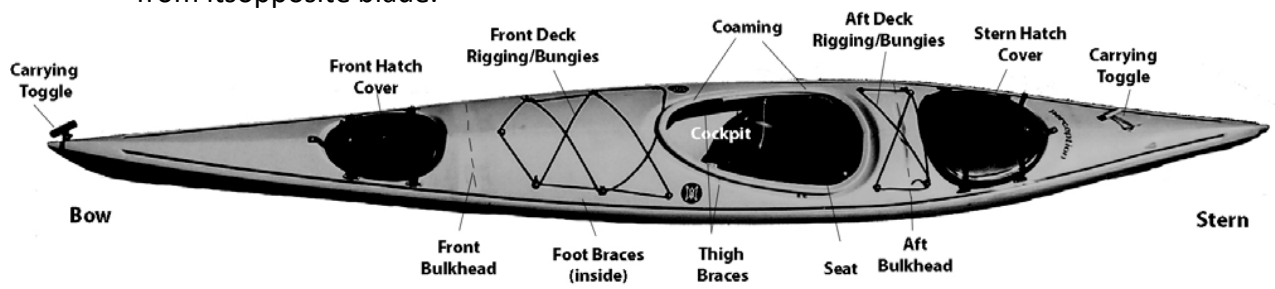
Deck: The top half of the kayak.

Draw Stroke: Used to move the boat sideways.

Dry-Bag: Waterproof storage bag.

Eskimo Roll: A self-rescue technique used to right an overturned kayak in the water without leaving theboat.

Feathered: A kayak paddle whose blades are angled to present the edge rather than the surface to the wind. A "feathered" blade on a kayak paddle is offset at an angle (60-90 degrees) from itsopposite blade.



Ferry: A maneuver used to cross a current with little or no downstream travel. Utilizes the current'sforce to move boat laterally.

Forward (Fore): Toward the bow from the cockpit.

Carry Loop: Also called "toggles"; Short rope or grab-handle threaded through bow/stern stems of akayak.

Hatch: Access port on front and/or rear deck of a touring sea kayak.

Heading: The direction the kayak is pointed.

Hull: The bottom half of the kayak.

PFD: Personal Flotation Device; a foam filled vest used for flotation.

Port: The left hand side of a kayak facing forward.

Rudder: Typically a foot controlled steering device on touring or sea kayaks. **Salamander:**

A tow-line incorporated into a stuff-sack that is worn on a belt around your

waist.**Shaft:** The area of a paddle between the blades.

Spray Skirt: A watertight material worn by the paddler and placed around the kayak's coaming.

Starboard: The right hand side of a kayak facing forward.

Stern: The back end of a kayak.

Sweep Stroke: Used to turn the boat to the non-paddle side.

Throw-Bag: Rescue device incorporating a long rope coiled inside a nylon bag.

Tracking: The ability of a kayak to hold a straight course.

Wet Suit: A garment that insulates by trapping water next to the skin beneath a layer of closed-cellneoprene.

SEA KAYAK PADDLE AND WHISTLE SIGNALS

(used here at the MAC)

Stop or Wait:

- Horizontal paddle above head
- One short whistle blast

Direction:

- Paddle pointed in the direction of desired travel

RAFT-UP:

- Vertical paddle above head
- Two short whistle blasts

I'm OK are you OK?:

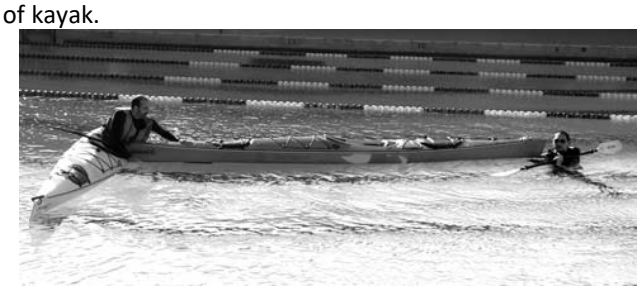
- Hand on top of head—both the person asking and the one responding; no response means the person needs HELP!

Emergency:

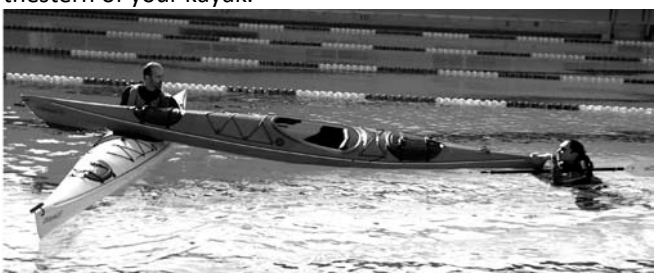
- Paddle held horizontally and moved up and down between head and upper torso repeatedly
- One continuous whistle blast

T-RESCUE

1. After capsizing position your kayak so it is perpendicular to the rescuer's kayak. This forms a T with the bow of your boat closest to the rescuer. The boat can be righted or left upside down depending on what works best for that type of kayak.



2. The rescuer then lifts the bow of your kayak over his/her cockpit so the kayak can be brought up onto the rescuer's boat. You can assist by applying downward pressure to thestern of your kayak.



3. The rescuer then flips the boat over and pulls the boat up until the cockpit is out of the water. This drains the waterfrom the boat.

4. Once the kayak has been drained it can be righted and raftedup next to the rescuer's kayak. Position the boats bow to stern.

5. The rescuer then places both paddles across both kayaks to aid stability. The paddles should rest in front of the coaming of your kayak's cockpit and firmly tucked under the rescuer's armpit (pit to pit).

6. Pull yourself onto the aft deck of your kayak. Reach over and grab onto the fore deck of the rescuer's kayak. Position yourself diagonally from your cockpit to the fore deck of therescuer's kayak.

7. Staying face down slide your legs into your kayak until youcan turn and sit on the seat. When sitting up turn toward the rescuer.

<u>Reminders:</u>

- Always stay in contact with your kayak.
- As rescuer cradle the boat in your arms (instead of draggingit over the spray skirt) when draining the water.
- Also as rescuer, do not raise the kayak above your head—you are prone to injury in this position.
- Avoid scooping water into the boat when it's being righted.
- Communicate with each other.

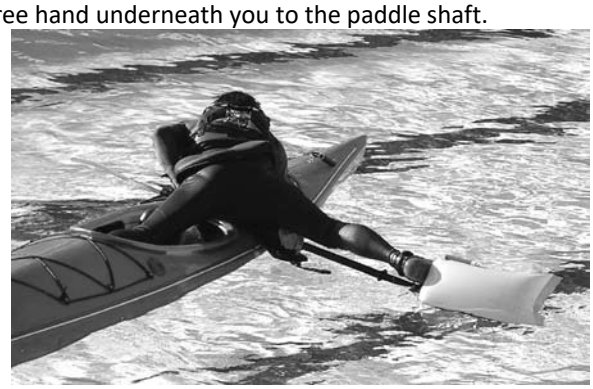
PADDLE-FLOAT RESCUE

1. After capsizing, stay with your kayak by hooking an arm or leg in the cockpit. NEVER LET GO OF YOUR KAYAK! Grab the paddle float, inflate one side and then slip it over your paddle blade. Inflate the other side.

2. Secure the paddle float strap around the paddle blade so it doesn'tfloat away.

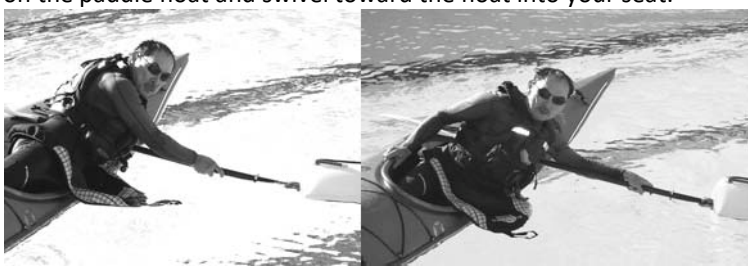
3. Position the paddle so it is perpendicular to the kayak. The shaft should rest behind the coaming. The paddle float shouldbe extended out over the water. Facing the kayak grasp the paddle shaft and coaming with one hand and pull yourself onto the rear deck of the kayak. Hook your feet on the part ofthe shaft extending over the water. The float now supports a portion of your weight.

4. Lying facedown on the rear deck with your head toward the stern,move one leg off the shaft and into your cockpit. Then move your free hand underneath you to the paddle shaft.



5. Move your second leg into the cockpit only after your free hand (the hand closest to the stern) swings around and extendsdown the shaft toward the paddle float.

6. Move the first hand off the shaft only after the second hand is positioned and extended on the paddle float side. Keep your weight on the paddle float and swivel toward the float into your seat.



7. Keeping the paddle float on the water for stability lift the other paddle blade over your head and reposition it across your lap. Now you can press the paddle shaft down against both sides of the cockpit to maintain stability while you bail.

Reminders:

- When pulling yourself onto the stern deck it's important to getyour center of gravity over the boat for stability.
- As soon as you pull yourself onto the stern of the kayak it's important to have at least one leg or hand extended on the shaft(toward the paddle float) at all times.
- Think of the paddle float as a rescuer. Keep your weight shiftedto your rescuer's side.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR STROKES

GENERAL IDEAS

- Keep a loose, relaxed grip.
- Always keep your hands equidistant on the shaft of the paddle.
- Hold the shaft away from your chest, just below eye level, with your elbows slightly bent.
- Place the blade as far ahead as possible (reach) without bending forward at the waist.
- Avoid creating a large splash when moving the blade in and out of the water; clean feathering.
- Keep the blade (not the shaft) fully immersed where it can pull back the most water.
- As you paddle, use the palm of your hand (near the thumb and forefinger) with slightly opened fingers.
- Get the majority of your power from your torso.
- The ball of your foot pushes against the foot brace—same side as the paddle blade in the water.
- Apply maximum power at the start of the stroke once the blade is fully submerged.
- Avoid unnecessary force.

SPECIFIC CONCEPTS:

FORWARD STROKE:

- Don't crunch power box; Wide grip—right angles on shaft and at elbows

- Reach blade into the water atyour feet without bending upper body forward
- Watch your paddle, turn yourhead—this helps rotate torso

- Keep hands just below eyelevel
- Rotate Torso (watch zipper onPFD move sideways)
- OK to cross kayak's centerline
- Remove paddle at hip

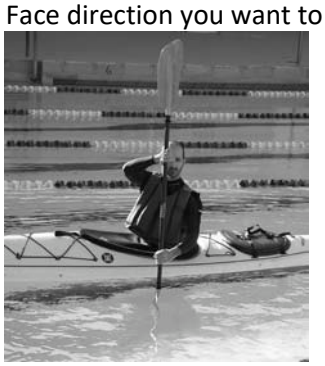
SWEEP STROKE:

- Keep hands low
- Expand power box—don't crunch
- Blade fully submerged

- No turbulence in water
- Paddle shaft horizontal to water
- Rotate blade all the way to the stern

DRAW STROKE:

- Paddle shaft vertical
- Face direction you want to go



- Hands far enough apart, slice blade away
- Blade submerged—don't flash blade
- Turn face of blade towards you and draw

SCULL DRAW:

- Pin elbow against side
- Face direction
- Torso rotation (is zipper from PFD moving back and forth?)
- Upper hand extended out with vertical shaft
- Waltzing Speed

BRACES:

- High Brace: Hands over elbows – tight tobody

- Lean: Don't angle paddle/shaft as boatangles (keep horizontal)

- Slap: Blade straight down
- Snap: Hips rotate boat upright

- Recover: Feather blade out of water
- Lean/Slap/Hip Snap/Recovery

- Low Brace: Emphasize elbows up

- Lean: Don't angle paddle/shaft as boatangles (keep horizontal)

- Slap: Blade straight down
- Snap: Hips rotate boat upright

- Feather blade out ofwater
- Lean/Slap/Hip Snap/Recovery

BACKSTROKE:

- Look behind you
- Torso Rotation
- Place blade flat and behind you, parallel to boat

- Rotate body pushing blade into the water
- Finish with paddle vertical
- For Hutchinson Back Stroke start with blade about 30° from back of boat

TOWING

When paddling with others there will always be people faster and some that are slower. Here at the UCLA Marina Aquatic Center we employ towing as a way to increase your endurance and strength and most importantly to keep the group together. Safety is our number one concern and a group paddling together is much safer than a group separated by distance. Please understand if an instructor decides to have you towed it isn't a reflection of your quality or worth as a kayaker, it's to increase the safety and skill level of your sea kayaking experience.

TOWING METHODS

1) Single Tow: One towing one- attach the towline to bow of the one being towed. A long towline is safer in higher seas.
2) In-Line Tow: Two towing one. This arrangement has three paddlers in line, with the one being towed positioned last. This is a good powerful system and you should be able to maintain the cruising speed of the main group.
3) One Towing Two: attach the towline to the bow of the one being towed. An additional boat rafts up next to the one being towed for support and stability.
4) Tandem Tows Two: an efficient way to tow an unstable paddler is to use two paddlers towing in tandem with a third paddler along side the one being towed.

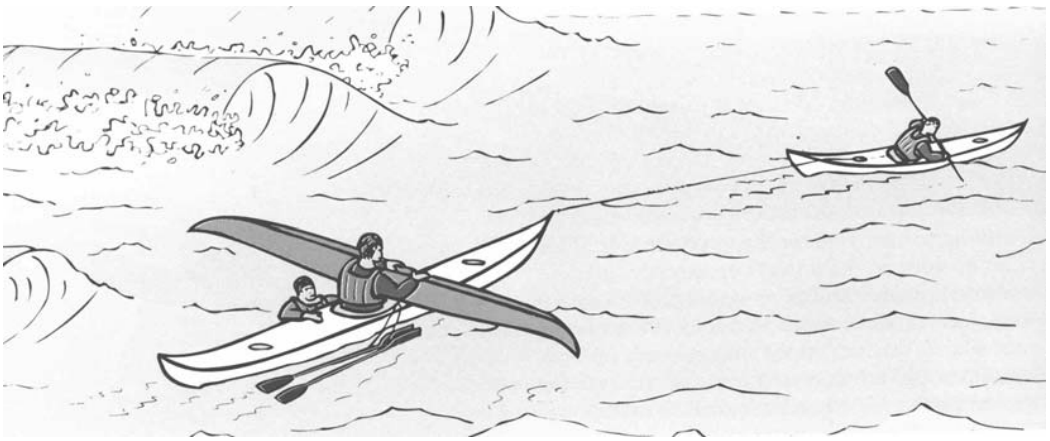
If for some reason you find yourself without a towline (and this shouldn't happen) you can use the following methods:

1) Bow Deck Tow (w/o rope): Another method for a tired paddler is for the towing kayak to allow the paddler to hug the bow or fore deck of the rescuing boat. The one being towed will be pushed toward shore.
2) Aft Hold-On (w/o rope): the one being towed holds onto the stern of the rescuing boat.

TOWING: ANCHORING A RESCUE

During deep-water rescues, those involved in emptying boats have little control over their amount of drift. Any accompanying paddler must therefore be prepared to help by either towing the rescuers out of trouble or acting as an anchor, holding everybody steady in one place while the rescue continues without interruptions.

Under normal circumstances any drifting can be ignored; lost ground can always be made up later. However, a number of situations would benefit from some towing assistance, for example rescues attempted near busy shipping lanes, surf, rocks or dangerous overfalls. In strong offshore winds, rescue kayaks can be anchored to prevent them being blown further out to sea, or towed in towards the shore to gain more protection.



PADDLING AND THE WIND

INTO THE WIND

- Hunch up, keep your head down
- Get rhythm going- full body torso twist and push with recovering arm
- Ease off stroke during gusts; anything over 25 mph and you should be only on protected waters
- Smaller swells- time your strokes so the paddle enters an oncoming wave and begin stroke as the crest arrives
- Larger waves- paddle quicker on the downward slope and ease off on the upward slope
- Take the least vulnerable course- it's much harder for a wave to knock you end over end than it is to roll you over on your side
- When things get out of control or you need a break, hold your position with a slow forward stroke
- Turning in waves is difficult and is best done on the crest of the wave

ACROSS THE WIND (Beam Sea)

- Your boat is the most unwieldy; weathercocking difficulties (boat wants to turn into the wind)
- Gentle winds: carved/edged turning into wind and broader sweep strokes
- Stronger winds: hunch low in your boat this will give the wind less to grab; keep arms and stroke lower (this prevents a gust from getting hold of the windward blade on its return stroke) if the wind catches the blade don't fight it, release the grip on the windward side
- Increasing waves: add a body lean to your carving to help counteract the lateral capsizing potential of the waves and to resist the wind.
- Threatening waves: break stride and brace, as if surfing. You can also turn into the waves and take them bow forward.
- To turn: might be difficult; try a reverse sweep windward while boat is at the top of the wave
- Make allowance for drifting with ferry glide

WITH THE WIND (Following Sea)

- Control weathercocking: forward sweep, ending in stern rudder will correct; make correction before boat yaws too far off course
- Paddle a little faster as your stern lifts with the oncoming wave
- Paddle a little harder when you feel yourself accelerating
- In the trough, stroke only enough to prevent yourself from being drawn back
- As the next wave approaches the cycle begins again
- Use a stern rudder stroke to manage direction; be ready to convert it to a low brace if you veer to far off and begin to broach
- When no longer in control, ease up, back paddle or turn your boat around and let yourself be blown backwards

REMINDERS:

- The greater the distance the wind blows unobstructed across the water (FETCH) the bigger the waves
- Wind against current will push waves closer together, making them steep and possibly breaking
- When crossing an entrance to a bay with offshore winds it's usually safer to hug the coastline

Useful aids to help you figure out the weather conditions:

- A radio weather forecast
- Knowledge of clouds and weather
- A check of the barometer
- Knowledge of previous weather conditions for the time of the year
- Information from local inhabitants
- A scan of the environment
- Experience