

INTRODUCTION

A simple canoe is how most people got their start on the water. Usually it was at an early age, say at summer camp or fishing with your dad. These boats are great because they can work in many different situations. Canoes are versatile and practical for a number of reasons but they also have a few drawbacks.

Because of the design of canoes they are easy to get in and out of. For younger paddlers this may seem like useless information but for older people wishing to get in the sport this could be a key selling point. Canoes can also hold a lot of gear if you are planning on buying one because you want use it on camping trips.

Another nice feature is that canoes come in an array of sizes. You can buy smaller one person canoes for running whitewater or you can buy much longer ones for long open water trips. These larger boats can carry two people and their gear with no problem. You could pack everything you wanted plus the kitchen sink if you had to!

There are some drawbacks to canoes as well. Unless you have a full sized pick up truck, canoes can be hard to load on cartops by your self. Even with help these boats are still large and awkward to pick up over your head.

Canoes are great on perfect sunny weekends but when the weather gets bad life in a canoe can be a hassle. Since these boats have an open top they can start filling up with water quick if its starts to rain. The rain probably won't sink you but it will make the rest of the trip annoying. Canoes also catch wind easy and can make steering and maneuvering some what difficult.

If you plan on doing long trips there is a good chance you may have to carry your canoe and gear somewhere. With a large canoe this can be a problem. Carts can be had but they won't work in every situation.

When it comes down to it canoes can be a great way to spend time in the water. Just make sure a canoe can suit your paddling needs. A canoe is the perfect any time paddle boat.

PACKING LIST FOR A CANOE DAY TRIP

Core Gear

- Canoe
- Paddles
- Personal Floatation Devices
- Water
- First Aid Kit
- Food
- Whistle
- Throw Rope
- Ziplock Bags
- Waterproof Bags
- Knife
- Map/Case
- Compass
- Duck Tape
- Bug Spray

Clothes

- Rain Gear
- Swimsuit
- Long Sleeve Shirt
- Short Sleeve Shirt

PADDLING RULES & ETIQUETTE

1. Ideally your paddling should not alter the behavior of wildlife. Its okay to observe, but give the animals a little space.

2. Respect the rights of the Fisherman. They are there to enjoy the outdoors as well, and have every right to the River as you do. Paddling over their line or yelling and screaming while you pass by, is not very good for the fishing.

3. Respect private property rights.

4. If you are paddling with people less experienced, assume the role as leader in as far as looking out for your group's safety and comfort. This also includes helping others when launching and landing.

5. Rules of the road are that the Canoe or Kayak in front of you has the right-of-way. Do not bump into their boat. This can easily cause a spill and cascading effect.

6. Use you whistle sparingly. It is for safety. Have a group code. Usually one long blast means all stop and help, two short blasts of the whistle means all stop.

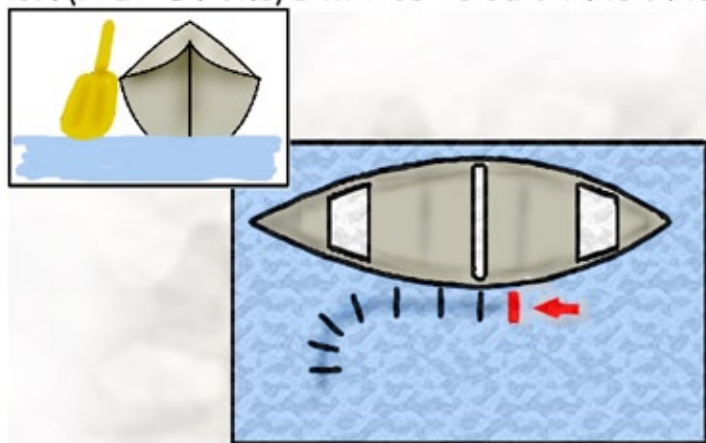
7. Lastly, practice low-impact environmental paddling. This includes leaving nothing behind, not even banana or orange peels.

CANOE BASIC PADDLING STROKES

There are many different Canoe strokes with many variations on each one. If you had to learn only three strokes, the following three would be your best choices. The FORWARD stroke (the simplest), the "J" strokes, and the DRAW stroke. The J strike and the Draw strokes are basically opposite strokes from one another.

The "J" STROKE

For a proper, efficient and smooth J-Stroke, the top hand on the palm grip of the paddle ALWAYS ends in thumb-down position at end of the stroke - not thumb up, not thumb sideways, or any other derivation of the thumb. It's thumb-down and push out with bottom arm, nothing else. Avoid the goofy variations your buddy developed in Nam, stick to the basics and remember this one simple fact: the canoe is steered from one side at a time by either pushing the stern to the right (J-Stroke) or pulling the stern to the left (Draw Stroke) and vice versa on the other side.



A "J Stroke" is a blend of two paddle maneuvers. The first half of a J Stroke is the power portion followed by the rudder portion which occurs in the last phase of the completed stroke. Sometimes you'll just need a flick of the rudder part of the stroke and other times you'll need to do a hard J. Watch your bow paddlers head as you look straight ahead to see what effect you are having on the canoe. If you watch your paddle, you'll have no refined control over the canoe. Gotta sit up straight, look straight ahead and paddle like you mean it. If you're a "paddle-dipper" you should maybe just get a room at the Holiday in and rent a movie. To paddle a J Stroke on the other side of the canoe, everything mirrors the picture about. Your hands switch but you still go thumb down and bottom arm out. It's the same maneuver on the other side of the canoe.

"FORWARD" STROKE

The paddle enters the water comfortably ahead of the paddler's position. With the blade perpendicular to the keel line and the paddle vertical, pull straight along the side of the canoe. Keep both arms relatively straight throughout all phases of the stroke. Push forward and down over the blade with the top arm and pull with the lower arm. Body and shoulder rotation provides much of the power.



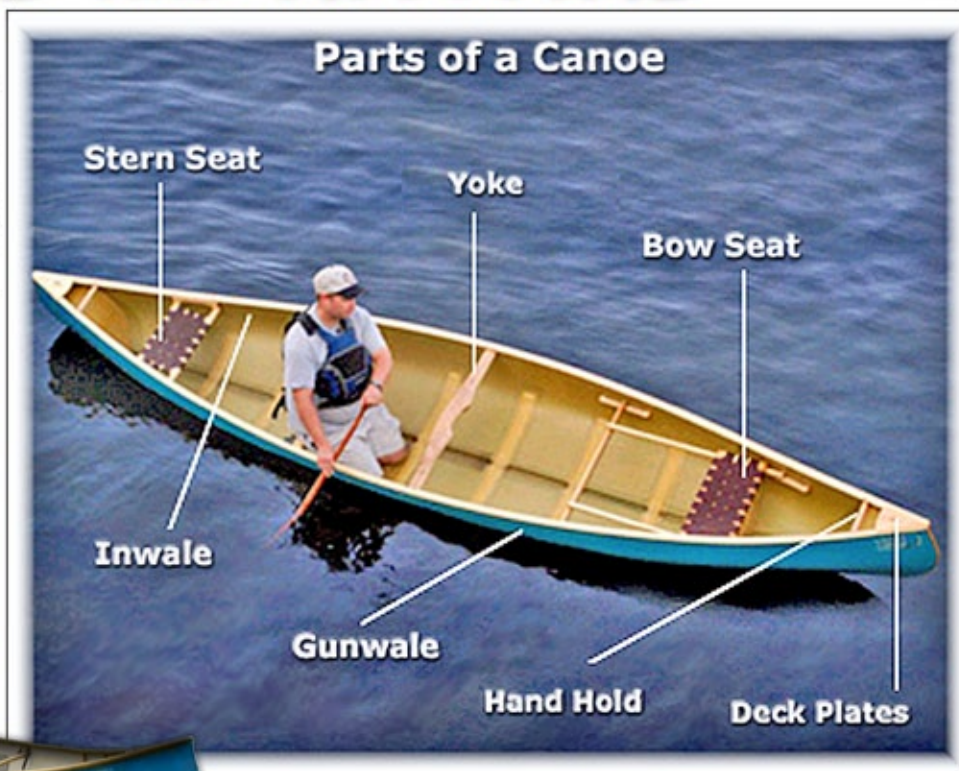
"DRAW" STROKE

Ok, this is the other main canoe stroke that you absolutely need to know. It is, for all intents and purposes, the exact opposite as the J Stroke. The J stroke pushes the back of the canoe away from the paddle and the Draw Stroke pulls the canoe to the paddle. Using the two strokes together allows you to stay on the same side of the canoe and change the canoe's course of direction without switching sides on the canoe after every two strokes. We do this because switching all the time has "pilgrim" written all over it. Yelling at your poor wife in the bow about how "she isn't a very good paddler" is just plain wrong. The guy/gal in the back of the canoe is the person entirely in charge of where the canoe is going, period. All responsibility for the direction of the canoe is with the person in the back.



PARTS OF A CANOE

The easiest way to lift or carry a Canoe is with one person. Properly centered, the Canoe becomes very easy to maneuver and carry. The picture below shows a canoe being "Portaged" over land.



PADDLING YOUR KAYAK

Power in paddling does not come from the arms. It comes from trunk (torso) rotation matched with leg drive (or leg pressure), with the arms little more than linkage between the power source and the paddle. Control of the kayak does not come from brute force. It comes from the right stroke being applied in the right direction at the right time - it's all done with coordination and balance. Kayak paddles have two blades, usually set at an angle to each other (called offset) between 60° and 85° apart.

The old method of determining the length is to stand the paddle vertically alongside you. If you can curl fingers over the top blade, the paddle is about the right length. This method is not perfect though. The best starting point is to talk to your local Rep. or Instructor to get an approximate

length to start with. A paddle shaft that is too long creates too long a lever, excessively loading the muscles that are providing the force. The length of the paddle should be chosen carefully as a paddle that is too long can cause injuries and make it impossible for the paddler to perform the correct technique.

With the paddle horizontally placed on the head and the elbows at right angles (the 'surrender' position), the hands will be at the correct spacing. The hands must be symmetrically placed, with the same hand to blade distance on each side.

With the paddle held in front of the body, the right hand blade will be vertical, the left hand blade face up. Keep the hands relaxed. Hands tend to wander along the shaft, and the positions should be regularly checked. Placing some electrical tape on the shaft just inside the hand positions can help to maintain your position.

HATCH Tie-Down STRAPS

PORT Side (left)

STERN

DECK HATCH

SEAT

COCKPIT COAMING

COCKPIT

SHOCK CORD Deck Rigging

DECK

STARBOARD Side (right)

GRAB HANDLE

BOW

