



Level 2: Essentials of Kayak Touring (Sample Skills Course)

Course Overview: The **Essentials of Kayak Touring** course is designed to teach beginner paddlers to safely and enjoyably kayak on lakes, calm protected ocean environments, and other flatwater settings.

Essential Eligibility Criteria: In order to participate in an ACA Skills Course, each participant must satisfy the following essential eligibility criteria:

- Be able to independently participate in all individual skills and activities listed in the course outline while also maintaining an appropriate and safe body position
- Be able to hold their breath while under water and, while in the water wearing a properly fitted lifejacket, be able to independently turn from a face down to a face up position keeping their head above water
- Be able to effectively communicate with the instructor and other course participants
- Be able to manage all personal care independently, or with the assistance of a companion
- Be able to manage all personal mobility independently, or with the assistance of a companion

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Duration: 8 hours

Course Location / Venue: Calm, protected flat water, within swimming distance of shore

Class Ratio - 1 Instructor to every 5 students (1:5) / 2:10 with an additional instructor or qualified assistant

Succeeding courses:

Coastal Kayaking Basic Strokes & Rescue
Stroke and Maneuver Refinement
Open Water Skills

The following is a general summary of course content for the **Essentials of Kayak Touring** 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:



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- 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)
- Learning judgment. Prudent behavior, being aware of what you don't know, can't handle, or should not risk
- Group Equipment: extra paddle, dry bags, first aid kit and rescue equipment (Depending on the environment and nature of the trip this may include cell phones, 2- way radios, paddle floats, rescue slings, etc).
- Guidebooks, maps/charts, local knowledge
- Assessing relevant existing and approaching environmental conditions including: tides, weather, time of day, water and air temperature, traffic, and accessibility
- Assessing personal and group dynamics (skills, equipment, group makeup, emotional concerns, logistics, and leadership).
- Filed Trip Plan

Getting Started:

- Warm-up and stretching
- How to pick up and carry a kayak safely

- Car topping: loading and unloading, racks, straps
- Launching and landing
- Boarding, three points of contact, weight kept low, etc
- Spray skirts (if applicable)
- Posture, safety, comfort, effectiveness, rocking, balance
- Wet exits
- Water comfort and confidence
- Self Rescue
- How to empty a kayak
- Basic Terminology
- Types of strokes (covered in this course): power, turning
- Stroke components: catch, propulsion, recovery (CPR), control, correction
- Safe and effective body usage

Equipment:

- Life Jackets (PFDs): types, fit
- Kayaks: types, materials, parts (including safety features such as flotation)
- Paddles: types, materials, parts, length, blade size, shape and offset, hand position
- Care of equipment
- Personal equipment: water, food, shoes, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent, sun glasses, eyeglass straps, protective clothing for heat or cold, sponge, bailer/pump, whistle (or other approved sounding device), knife, light
- Optional equipment and outfitting for improved control

Safety & Rescue:

- Exercising Judgment, Safety as a mind-set, etc
- Cold Water Shock / Hypothermia: HELP/Huddle, clothing



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- Dehydration/ hyperthermia: hydration, clothing
- Hazards: wind, waves, weather, current, rocks, bridges, piers, dams, strainers, traffic
- Paddling as a group
- Signaling
- Interactions/ Sharing water with non powered and powered traffic
- Emergency procedures
- 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

Rescue

- Rescue sequence: RETHROG
- Rescue priorities: people, boats, gear
- Demonstrate/participate: T-X rescue
- Deep-water re-entries, assisted and solo, with sling, scooping
- Boat assisted rescue, assisting a tired swimmer (pushing or pulling to shore)
- Towing or bulldozing a capsized boat

Maneuvers:

- Paddling in a reasonably straight line
- Spins
- Stopping
- Moving Abeam

Strokes:

- Forward
- Back (stopping)
- Draw
- Sculling draw/brace
- Sweep (including Stern Draw)
- Reverse Sweep
- Rudder
- Low / High Brace

Conclusion & Wrap Up:

- Group debrief / Individual feedback
- Course limitations
- Importance of First Aid & CPR



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