

UCLA

Marina Aquatic Center

Sea Kayaking II Handouts



www.recreation.ucla.edu/mac 

TOWING

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 of major 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

Single Tow: One towing one.

- attach the towline to bow of the one being towed. A long towline is safer in higher seas.

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.

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.

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 you can use the following methods:

- 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.
- 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

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!
2. Grab the paddle float, inflate one side and then slip it over your paddle blade. Inflate the other side. Secure the paddle float strap around the paddle blade so it doesn't float away.
3. Position the paddle so it is perpendicular to the kayak. The shaft should rest behind the coaming. The paddle float should be extended out over the water.
4. 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 of the shaft extending over the water. The float now supports a portion of your weight.
5. Lying facedown on the rear deck with your head toward the stern, move one leg off the shaft and into your cockpit.
6. Move your second leg into the cockpit only after your free hand (the hand closest to the stern) swings around and extends down the shaft toward the paddle float.
7. 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.
8. 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 get your 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 shifted to your rescuer's side.



Rescues: 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.
2. The rescuer then lifts the bow of your kayak over his/her cockpit in order to break the seal and drain out the water. You can assist by applying downward pressure to the stern of your kayak.
3. Once the kayak has been drained it can be righted and rafted up next to the rescuer's kayak. Position the boats bow to stern.
4. 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).
5. 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 the rescuer's kayak. Staying face down slide your legs into your kayak until you can turn and sit on the seat. When sitting up turn toward the rescuer.
6. Stay rafted up until you have attached your spray skirt and are ready to continue paddling.

Reminders:

- Always stay in contact with your kayak.
- As rescuer cradle the boat in your arms (instead of dragging it 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.

