

# Basic Skills & Strokes

## Use a Feathered Paddle

- Right hand control even if left-handed
- Short paddle, steep entry angle recommended – see section on paddle selection

## Basic Rescue

- Wet exit and hang on to paddle
- Tow swimmer to shore
- Paddle with two paddles in hand
- Tug boat or boat over boat to rescue boat
- “Boat over boat” aka “T-Rescue” to empty water
- Avoid injury when emptying water from heavy boats
- ReThRoG – Reach, Throw, Row, Go
- Self, Team, Victim, Equipment
- Safe eddy rule – very shallow or eddy before standing
- #1 Rule of Rescue – don’t create another victim

## Hip Snap

- Just a simple C 2 C arching of back
- Bow rescue or assisted Eskimo rescue
- Basic motion for bracing and rolling
- Learn to Hip Snap off side of Pool
- More on balance and bracing
- Video / demo
- Pool practice

## Balance, Bracing & Edging

- Test effect of paddle in the water – raise/lower
- “Paddle in the water...you are in control”
- “Paddle out of the water...river is in control”
- C 2 C arching or “hipsnap”

## Low Brace

- Elbows above paddle shaft
- Brace with back face of paddle
- Use “hipsnap” to drop head in the direction you are about to fall
- Majority of bracing is done with a “hipsnap” rather than the paddle

## High Brace

- Elbows below paddle shaft
- Brace with power face of the paddle
- Use “hipsnap” to drop head in the direction you are about to fall
- Majority of bracing is done with a “hipsnap” rather than the paddle

### **Forward Sweep Stroke - Turning**

- Learn to turn the boat – easiest move, first to learn
- Strong torso rotation to wind up
- Anchor paddle blade in the water near bow
- Rotate torso to turn boat
- Stroke is done with **torso rotation**, not the arms

### **Reverse Sweep Stroke - Turning**

- Learn to turn the boat
- Strong torso rotation to wind up
- Anchor paddle blade in the water near stern
- Rotate torso to turn boat
- Stroke is done with **torso rotation**, not the arms

### **Forward Stroke – Going Straight**

- Paddling forward and straight – most difficult of strokes
- Body erect and leaning slightly forward
- Look where you want to go
- No one way is correct. There are many variations.
- Pull boat forward rather than push it – short strokes in front of torso
- Stop pressure at about the torso, then bend the elbow and lift blade from water
- Use a steep angle of entry / close to boat – avoid a sweep
- Use back muscles rather than arm muscles to apply pressure
- Stroke is done with **torso rotation**, not the arms

### **Back Stroke – Going Straight**

- Paddling in reverse
- Close as possible to forward stroke in reverse
- Body erect and leaning slightly forward
- Pull the boat backwards – difficult because it is hard to reach behind for a bite
- Stop pressure at about the torso, then bend the elbow and lift blade from water
- Use a steep angle of entry / close to boat – avoid a sweep
- Use back muscles rather than arm muscles to apply pressure
- Stroke is done with **torso rotation**, not the arms
- However, arms are likely needed

### **Draw Stroke – “Stern Draw” – Straighten without Slowing**

- Like magic to straighten boat without slowing
- Very useful for boats with little directional stability
- Basically, this is the last third / fourth of a forward sweep
- Begin with paddle about 30-45 degrees off stern
- Draw water toward stern
- Stroke is done with **torso rotation**, not the arms
- Done while looking where you want to go

### **Draw Stroke – “Draw to the Side” to move sideways**

- Rotate torso so you are looking 90 degrees to the side – where you are going
- Raise hull in front of your travel
- Grab a bite and pull water under hull
- Rotate blade or pick up for another bite
- Stroking is done with arms

### **Draw Stroke – “Skulling Draw” to move sideways**

- Sculling method / “spreading peanut butter”
- Look where you want to go
- Skull the blade (spread the peanut butter) near the center of the hull drawing the water under the hull.
- Adjust forward or back to keep boat from turning
- Stroking is done with arms

### **Ruddering – Advanced Control Technique**

- Control direction with paddle as rudder
- Rotate torso – face side of boat with chest
- Eyes are looking where you want to go
- Place blade along side the stern and move as a rudder

### **J-Stroking – Advanced Control Technique**

- Keep boat straight by paddling on one side only
- Fun and useful if close to bank or brush on one side
- Same as canoe J-Stroke
- Forward stroke followed by a rudder stroke

### **Duffek Stroke – Rapid Turning about a Point**

- Rapid turning
- Racing move, whitewater move
- Great for catching eddies
- Ask for help. Instructions are complex to write and understand

### **Edging / J Lean**

- Not really a stroke. Mostly needed in whitewater.
- Should be able to perform all strokes while edging the boat
- Arch the back or raise a knee to edge the boat
- Practice forward and sweep strokes while boat is edged

### **Eskimo Roll**

- Body motion (“hipsnap”) not a stroke
- Needed for whitewater, recommended for sea kayakers, challenge for all kayakers

Revised: September 20, 2007 by Chris Collins