

7 Common Kayaking Mistakes

and How to Avoid Them



2020 and 2021 were boom years for paddlesports and it led to kayak and canoe shortages across the US and Canada. A large portion of the boom was due to the covid-19 pandemic. Kayaking, it turns out, is the perfect socially distanced sport. You can get out of nature without having to be close to people—other than your immediate family—if you don't want to be. You also get some Vitamin D to help out your immune system at a crucial time!

Not Keeping an Eye on the Weather

It's shocking how fast weather conditions can switch when you're out on the water. You look outside in the morning and think, "Best kayaking weather ever!" By the time you get to the lake, river, or beach, things have taken a turn for the worst. First, learn how to read both short and long-range forecasts. Pay attention to temperature, wind strength, detection, and storm warnings.



Not Wearing Appropriate Gear

Those heading out on solo and tandem kayaks need to make sure they're dressed for the weather and the possibility of submersion. Getting the balance right can be challenging, especially if you're new to kayaking. You might be out for an hour or you may be gone an entire day. Either way, if you end up capsizing or the weather changes from sunny and hot to cool and rainy, you're setting yourself up for failure and possible illness.

Not Thinking About Your Technique

One issue many new paddlers run into is hugging the paddle too close to your body. This results in you bending your elbow too much, putting unnecessary pressure on your muscles. The proper kayaking technique starts with holding the paddle a reasonable distance from your chest. Keep your upper and lower body movements working together and use your hips and body for direction, stability, and maneuvering.



You Never Learned to Self-Rescue

One of the most potentially dangerous situations a kayaker can find themselves in is when they're turned upside down and immersed in water. This can happen when riding large waves or traveling down whitewater rivers. Whether you're kayaking in groups or solo, you need to know how to roll upright if you capsize. This is a skill you can practice. Until you master this tricky technique, you can learn to self-rescue by flipping yourself back over with a paddle float.

Not Using Kayak Safety Gear

But that's only if you actually wear one! And just feeling uncomfortable isn't a good enough excuse. For ultimate wearability, invest in a PFD vest that's designed for kayaking. They're lightweight, more compact, and allow freedom of movement.

- ✔ A paddle float
- ✔ A Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)
- ✔ A bilge pump
- ✔ Cell Phone
- ✔ Marine flares
- ✔ Waterproof device bag
- ✔ A portable radio



Drinking and Paddling

We hope this goes without saying, but no one should be on the water if they've been drinking alcohol. Even a little bit is too much. In 2020, alcohol consumption was responsible for almost 20 percent of American boating fatalities.

Using Damaged or Poor Quality Kayak

Whether you are using a traditional kayak or one of the increasingly popular inflatable kayaks, you must make sure it is seaworthy and ready to perform. Getting on the water with a kayak that is damaged or of poor quality can be disastrous in the wrong conditions.



How to Avoid Common Kayaking Mistake

Regularly reviewing lists of common kayaking mistakes is a great idea for a newbie paddler or a seasoned kayaker. If you're just starting out, you need to know what to do and not do for success on the water. As a more experienced paddler, you can get complacent and think you know everything already. A good brush up on common errors will keep you sharp.

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