



Flatwater Kayaking

Recommended Age Group: Yr. 6+

Activity Description (clear & concise):

Introduction to kayaking in flatwater (not moving or moving slowly)

Equipment Required:

- Kayaks
 - PFD (life jackets)
 - Paddles
 - Throw bag belt
 - First aid kit
 - Balls or other activity equipment needed
 - Whistle
 - Helmets – ocean only
 - Dry bag
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Number of Coastlife Staff Required:

1 instructor: 12 students

Duration of Activity: 1.5 hrs

Suitable Location/Setting: Any still or slow moving water body. Usually run at Mogareeka near bridge or at Wallagoot Lake.

Safety Considerations:

- Drop and strain injuries from handling boats out of water.
 - Marine stings/bites. Injuries from rocks/oyster shells.
 - Stranding in strong wind.
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Program Delivery

Introduction Briefing Points:

Safety Briefing

Every lesson must include a safety briefing that occurs before participants enter the water. It should be relevant to the present conditions, the ability of the group and the lesson content.

- Wearing Wetsuit – weather dependant
- Correct fitting of the PFD's (life jackets)
- Correct use of the kayak and paddling instructions
- Signals with paddles for rafting up and attention required
- Safety in hot and cold weather conditions
- Weather, tide, surf conditions

It is very important to establish some commands or signals that all participants understand before you get into the water, in case of an emergency.

Basic Paddling Skills

Basic kayak skills are essential before heading out on the water. It is important to go over things such as:

- How to hold a paddle correctly
- Basic strokes: forward & backwards strokes, forward & reverse sweep stroke, draw stroke etc.
- How the blade should enter & exit the water
- Where to sit in the boat
- How to steer a kayak/ how to work as a team in your boat
- Which side to paddle on in order to turn
- How to slow down & stop
- How to paddle backwards
- How to get back in a your boat if you fall out/capsize

All these things may seem really simple, but for participants who have never been kayaking/canoeing before it is essential they have an understanding before they get into the water. This will only make them feel more confident & keep them out of trouble & will ensure they have a more enjoyable lesson. Simple games incorporating necessary kayak strokes will help your students develop their confidence and skills.

Activity Delivery

After briefing, paddle to a suitable space away from other water craft and swimmers/fisher people.

Below are some games to use as time allows to sharpen the groups paddling skills or break up the kayak journey.

Kayaking Games

Red light/ Green Light

This game requires the participants to get in a line side by side with space between them. Facing the instructor & waiting for instructions. You can then give any challenge to the group & as a pair they must do their best in their boats to complete these tasks:

Green light: this means paddle towards you

Red light: this means stop

360: they must do a full circle in their boats as quick as possible

Backwards: Paddle backwards

Piano Keys

A real trust exercise requiring balance. One at a time, participants will walk/run along the raft of kayaks, relying on other participants for stability. All kayaks must be rafted alongside one another, with everyone holding onto the boat next to theirs. You can either give them the challenge of staying dry or they can jump in the water at the end. You must wait for the participant to get back into kayak before next person starts.

Kayak Switch

Have the boats all spread out, on your command yell out 2 participant's names & have them switch as quickly as possible into each other's boats. You can also yell out multiple people's names, so lots of people are moving at 1 time, do this in flat water, as you will have many people in the water at 1 time. You can also have all boys switch or all girls.

Relay Races

All kids love to race, so set up 1 giant race from point A to point B, or have them team up, & start at 1 point & go out around something (an instructor) & back. They must tag the next person in their group's hand before they can go.

Rafting Up

Rafting up is a safety procedure, allowing the group to handle situations or hold discussions while on the water. By moving as a unit, stability is increased and individual boats do not have to work to stay in the same place. This activity can lead into a Raft Stand or Raft Walk.

Paired Challenges

Have all boats spread out away from each other & then shout different commands for the pairs to do, such as:

- Person in the back stand & paddle or person in the front do this
- 1 person in your boat stands up & spins around 3 times then sits down, then switch
- Both people stand up & paddle
- Both people turn around backwards & paddle
- Both people switch places as quickly as possible
- Everybody capsize & then get back in the quickest
- Do a 360 spin the quickest

You can give as many different challenges as you like, always pausing & waiting for everyone to be ready for the next challenge. Each challenge should last 30 second to 1 minute

You should do this in flat water, that's not moving quickly. You need to be very aware of your surroundings in this activity, as you will have multiple people falling out & in the water. It needs to be organised & you need to be ready to help those back into boats that need help.

Sharks and Minnows

A classic, only a bit trickier in kayaks. Instructor needs to establish a perimeter for play, and the hungry shark(s) try to make contact with all the other boats, as they call different people across. You can also play it like 'fishy fishy cross my ocean if' & then only certain boats will cross at 1 time.

Kayak/Canoe Tag

Have 1 kayak or canoe be 'in' & all the other boats spread out, on the instructor whistle they can play tag. If your boat gets tagged you're now in & so on.

Tennis Ball Chase

You will need a bucket of tennis balls for this activity. Throw as many tennis balls out into the water, spread out all over. Then on your whistle have each boat collect as many as they can. Team with the most balls at the end wins. Another way to play is have them collect as many balls as they can & try & throw them into other people's boats. If they land in your boat you must leave them, the aim is to try & not have any land in your boat & get as many into other people's boats.

Tail Chase

Attach coloured material to the end of either a kayak or canoe. Attach roughly 3-4 to each boat & then once you begin play, have the groups try & steal as many material strips from other people's boats as they can. You can't grab your own off your boat, you must steal others. Once you have them in your boat, leave them in there until the end. You can pair up with other boats & splashing is definitely ok! Team with the most at the end wins.

Dizzy Relays

Have all groups paddle up onto the beach & hop out of boats. Pull boats up onto sand. Leave 2 down facing the water, on the water's edge. Make a line in the sand about 10 meters back from the kayaks, & have 2 teams lined up, spread out from each other. On your whistle 2 people from each team pick up a paddle, holding it up above & spinning around 10 times. They then run down & get into the kayak. 2 people per kayak & race out around an object in the water or Instructor. They then race back to shore, hand over the paddles to next people in their team & they continue.

Follow the Leader

Basic follow the leader game. With young kids this is great for practicing paddling techniques.

Kayak Polo

Set up an area & make 2 teams. You need a large ball that will float & 2 goal areas. Once you begin the game, the teams must work together to score a point for their group. In order to get a point, they need to get the ball across a certain line, or into the goal. Whichever kayak or canoe has the ball, they cannot paddle, and they must then throw it between the team to get it to the goal line. If the boat that has the ball gets tagged, they switch it to the other team. You need to spread out for this game & you need a big space set up.

On a warm day it can be fun to finish the session with an everybody-in mass capsize and re-entry, if conditions are suitable. It may be necessary to pair boats to help each other and take turns.

Debrief Points and Outcomes:

Discuss any difficulties participants had during the session or what their favourite part of the session was.

Ask the group to assist rinsing and packing away equipment if possible.