

Get Moving: Kayaks

How to Hold Your Paddle

Unlike a canoe paddle, most kayak paddles have curved **blades**. They also have a top and a bottom.

Hold the paddle with both hands. The blades should be curved towards you. The distance between your hands should be a little wider than your shoulders.



FORWARD STROKE: Moves the kayak forward.

- Rotate your upper body by twisting at your waist, and place the blade in the water near your feet.
- Uncoil your body as you pull the blade towards you.
- Once the blade reaches your hips, bring it out of the water. Repeat step one on the opposite side.



REVERSE STROKE: Moves the kayak backwards.

- Rotate your upper body by twisting at your waist. Place the blade in the water near your hips.
- Uncoil your body as you push the blade towards the bow (front) of the kayak.
- Once the blade reaches to about your knees, bring it out of the water. Repeat step one on the opposite side.



DRAW: Moves the kayak towards the side you are paddling on.

- Rotate your upper body towards the side you are going to move the kayak. Turn the paddle, so the blade is parallel (same direction) to your kayak.
- Without leaning your shoulders outside the gunwale, reach and place the blade in the water away from the kayak. Your opposite hand should be raised high above your head.
- Pull the paddle towards the kayak. Bring the blade out of the water before it touches the kayak.



SWEEP: Moves the kayak towards the left or right while moving forward.

- Rotate your upper body by twisting at your waist, and place the blade in the water near your feet.
- Uncoil your body as you pull the blade in an arc (half circle) away from the kayak.
- Once the blade reaches your hips, bring it out of the water.

