

HOW TO KAYAK

An illustration of a kayak on a body of water. The kayak is orange and pointed at the front. A black paddle is in the water. The water is green with white ripples. In the background, there are dark green mountains under a light blue sky.


PADDLES

Know your paddles

Holding your paddle correctly is key to having an efficient, nonfatiguing stroke. Ask your guide or paddle shop to make sure you have the correct fit.


MATCHED

It's easier to learn with matched blades.

An illustration of a matched paddle. It has two identical dark blue blades on a black shaft. A target icon is on the left blade.

FEATHERED

If they are feathered, press the button and rotate the two shaft halves until the blades are parallel.

An illustration of a feathered paddle. It has two dark blue blades on a black shaft, but the blades are at different angles. A target icon is on the right blade.

Orient your blades

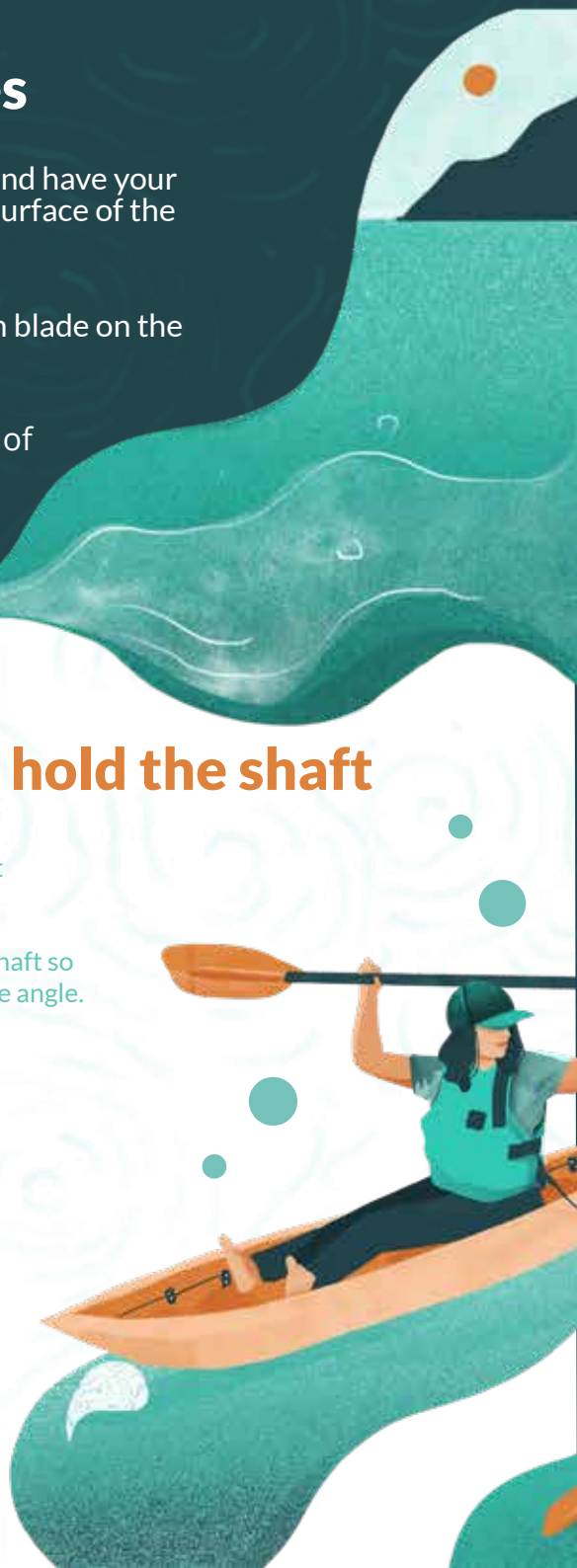
- Point your large knuckle up and have your blades perpendicular to the surface of the ground.
- Place the shorter side of each blade on the bottom.
- You want the concave side of each blade facing you.

Adjust where you hold the shaft

- Rest the paddle shaft's centerpoint on your head.
- Now readjust your grip along the shaft so that your elbows are at a 90-degree angle.


Relax your grip

- Make an "O" around the shaft with your index finger and thumb.
- Then rest your other fingers lightly on the shaft.



PADDLES

Forward stroke




Submerge one end of the paddle in the water near your toes.

Next, propel the kayak forward by pulling the blade back towards your hip

While pulling the paddle blade out of the water, rotate your body forward while dipping the opposite blade into the water.

Reverse stroke




Stick the blade of the paddle in the water in the direction you want to move and rotate your torso in that direction.

The paddle should be far out enough from the kayak that both of your hands are over the water.

Pull to draw your kayak towards the blade.

Draw stroke



Submerge one end of the paddle in the water between your body and the stern (which is the back of the kayak).

Look behind you and propel the paddle forward towards your toes.

Allow your body to rotate back into a square sitting position and repeat the process on the opposite side.

Sweep stroke

To use a sweep stroke to turn forward:

Place the end of the paddle in the water by your toes against the bow, or front, of the kayak.

Draw back the paddle in a half-moon arc towards the stern of the kayak.

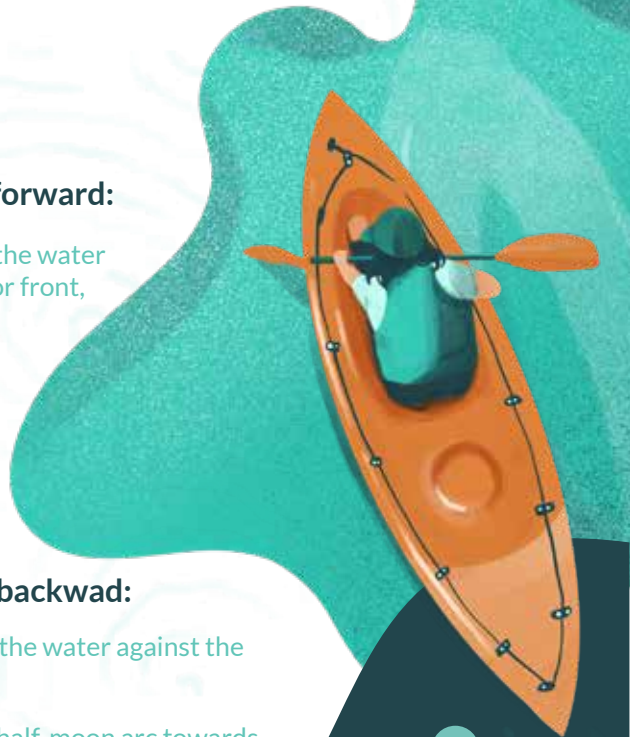
Rotate your torso with the paddle.

To use a sweep stroke to turn backward:

Place the end of the paddle in the water against the stern of the kayak.

Draw the paddle forward in a half-moon arc towards the bow of the kayak.

Rotate your torso with the paddle.



STUFF TO ALWAYS REMEMBER

Donot venture out without safety equipment or supervision.

Donot venture out without proper training.

Beware of the weather and water conditions.

Always follow the boating rules of the area you're in.