



Info on Adaptive Paddling

Kayaking

Kayaking is a recreational activity in which individuals can experience the outdoors and get an excellent cardiovascular workout. Kayaking can be done almost anywhere and it is easily adapted to various ability levels. The American Canoe Association (ACA) promotes the benefits of canoeing and kayaking while offering courses on the basics of paddling, safety and rescue courses, and instructor certification.



Safety Considerations

- Proper clothing is essential when paddling.
- Personal flotation devices should be worn at all times regardless of experience.
- Temperature regulation is important when paddling due to the exposure to wind and water. Wet suits can provide insulation, additional cushioning, and protection from skin abrasions.
- Always paddle with a partner and be aware of weather conditions.
- Never get into a situation that exceeds your paddling ability.
- Practice sun safety at all times...bring lots of lotion.

Adaptations and Modifications

- Standard paddles can be easily adapted for paddlers with single arm amputation or for the individual with hemiplegia due to a stroke or cerebral palsy. My-Grip® can assist paddlers with visual impairments with learning the proper grip and hand placement on the paddle. Also, taping a straw or dowel in the proper position can give the visually impaired paddlers a sense of position.
- For individuals with impaired grip, four pieces of bike tubing can be assembled with pull-ties and electrical tape or duct tape to create an adapted handgrip. Gloves with Velcro sewn on are also effective in giving increased contact with the paddle.
- Proper fit and comfort is essential because water increases the breakdown of skin and can lead to an increased risk of pressure sores. For a snug fit into the kayak, closed-cell foam and adaptive seating systems may be used for increased contact to the boat.
- Versa FormT pillows may be used to create a backrest or seat cushion for increased contact with the kayak and comfort for the participant. The pillow conforms to an individual's body when the air is pumped out.

Types of Kayaks

Tandem kayaks allow beginners, individuals with visual impairments, and individuals who have little paddling power to participate. The paddling partner or instructor in the stern seat provides assistance with paddling, steering and safety issues.

There are several types of kayaks available. Each one has different qualities to aid individuals with different needs.

Sit-on-top

Sit-on-top or "open decked" kayaks (pictured above left) work well in hot climates and for individuals that need little seating adaptation. The negative aspects of a sit-on-top include a higher center of gravity and an individual must have enough upper body strength or use of their feet to do an in-water rescue.



White-water

White-water boats (pictured above right) are versatile and easy to maneuver. Some people may tend to have problems tracking and these boats can often be very easy to tip.

Inflatable

Inflatables (pictured right) work well for people with higher injury levels or that have some balance issues. However, inflatables can catch wind easily and make them difficult to maneuver.



Sea Kayak

Sea kayaks (pictured above) are well suited for most people. They track well and come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. For some individuals with balance problems a sea kayak will not work without additional support. Different hull designs and widths can help adapt the boat to an individual's ability / balance level.

The Tribalance by Tribal is one example of some of the specialty kayaks available that can provide more stability to individuals with balance issues. It is built with outriggers, which adds a tremendous amount of stability.



Equipment Suppliers

Aire (inflatable kayaks) www.aire.com 800-701-AIRE

Folbot (folding kayaks) www.folbot.com (800) 533-5099

Necky Kayaks (tandems, sit-on-tops, etc.) www.necky.com (604) 850-1206

Prijon Kayaks (sea, white water kayaks etc.) www.wildnet.com (303) 444-2336

Sammons Preston (Versa FormT, My-Gripr) www.sammonspreston.com (800) 323-5547

Tribal Kayaks (Tribalance) www.tribalance.com/index.html (800) 587-4225

Walden Kayaks (kayaks, accessories, etc.) www.waldenkayak.com (888) 371-3033

BOOKS Canoeing and Kayaking for Persons with Physical Disabilities
American Canoe Association www.aca-paddler.org (703) 451-0141

American Canoe Association (ACA) www.aca-paddler.org (703) 451-0141 or
contact: Scott LeBlanc, ACA Chair of adaptive paddling committee at (210) 592-5358

British Canoe Union www.bcu.org.uk 0115 9821100

Professional Paddlesports Association (PPA) www.propaddle.com (606) 472-2205

NOTE

The information provided here is offered as a service only. Adaptive Adventures does not formally recommend or endorse the equipment listed. As with any products or services, consumers should investigate and determine on their own which equipment best fits their needs and budget.