

CHOOSING THE RIGHT KAYAK

Jerry Wylie ~ Connecticut Coastal Kayaking, LLC

Let us help you with your kayak testing, classes, tours & special events

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WHY you paddle + **WHERE** you paddle = **SUITABLE KAYAK TYPE**

General kayak types (see reverse side)...all have advantages

- ★ Recreational (play in protected waters)
- ★ Light Touring Sea Kayak (general purpose)
- ★ Greenland Sea Kayak (challenging waters)
- ★ Folding & Inflatable kayaks (travel/portability)
- ★ Sit-on-top kayaks (play in warm waters, surfing, fishing)

RULES OF THUMB

Long & narrow boats track better in a straight line and are faster (easier to move)

Shorter boats turn easier

More rocker (curved bottom) turns easier

Wider & flatter hull gives more initial stability

Less initial stability (tippier) is easier to edge and more seaworthy

Lower profile is less affected by the wind

Lighter boats are more expensive

CHOOSING BY ADVANTAGES

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ▪ Materials | ▪ Sit-on-top vs. Sit-inside style |
| ▪ Color | ▪ Small vs. Large cockpit |
| ▪ Price | ▪ High vs. Low deck |
| ▪ Weight/portability | ▪ Initial vs. Secondary stability |
| ▪ Single or double (1 or 2 person) | ▪ High vs. Low volume |
| ▪ Rudder vs. Skeg | ▪ Easy to turn vs. Straight track |

HOW TO TEST A KAYAK

In the shop ~ Comfortable feel. Secure fit. Ease of getting in and out.

On the water ~ Same as shop plus:

1. Initial and secondary stability in shallow water with paddle support on bottom
2. Knee-hang to hold the kayak on an edge...is it comfortable?
3. Spin 360 degrees first w/ flat boat and then edged toward paddle
4. Forward stroke to check trackability/yaw & see if your knuckles hit the deck
5. Ease of turning with sweep stroke?
6. How is it affected by crosswind?
7. How well does it carve a turn when you edge the boat? (experienced paddlers)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Why + Where = Type of Boat + Advantages + Price = Short list of boats to test

Test boats + optional features & color = The Right Boat for You!

GENERAL TYPES OF KAYAKS

RECREATIONAL KAYAKS

("Rec Boats")



SEA KAYAKS

LIGHT TOURING
("American style")



GREENLAND
("British style")



Beginner paddler	Beginner-Intermediate paddler	Advanced paddler
Length less than 12' Slightly longer for double	Length 12'-16' up to 22' for double	Length 16-18'
Width 25" and more	Width usually 22-24"	Width 22" or less
Play paddling Protected waters Small lakes Short day trips	General paddling CT R. & Long Is. Sound Day trips & weekend camping	Specialty paddling Coastal/Ocean (wind & waves) Extended expeditions Eskimo rolling
Wide, flat hull shape feels very stable	Good initial & secondary stability	Lower initial stability (feels tippy) Easy to edge
Usually "tupperware" plastic	"Tupperware" plastic, space-age plastics & composite materials	Fiberglass or Kevlar composites
Inexpensive	Moderate price	Expensive
Limited or no floatation or waterproof bulkheads	Waterproof bulkheads and 2 storage compartments	Waterproof bulkheads and 2 storage compartments
No rudder	Typically has a rudder	Skeg optional
Usually no deck lines	Deck lines typical	Deck lines
Very large cockpit No spray skirt	Moderate sized cockpit Usually w/ spray skirt	Smaller cockpit Always w/ spray skirt
Shorter & turns easily	Turns easily w/ rudder	Turns w/ technique
Hard to track straight	Tracks well	Tracks well
High profile catches wind		Low profile avoids wind

Note: The lines between these 3 types are beginning to blur w/ new hybrids.