

The 6 Phases of our paddling stroke

1) Set Up Phase

- Maximum reach and twist with the paddle blade just out of the water.
- Paddle blade perpendicular to canoe hull.
- Lower hand around 1 hand width from the start of the blade face.
- Top hand should not be outside the canoe.
- Bottom arm with minimal bend and locked.
- Top arm slightly bent and locked.
- Leading leg (paddle side) extended and firmly planted. Offside leg bent under the seat.
- Both legs (knees) braced against canoe to lock the paddler in.
- Straight back, possibly a small forward lean.
- Head up.

2) Entry Phase

- Plant the blade. **Push** the blade cleanly into the water.
- Drop bottom shoulder to move arms down and drive the full blade into the water up to the neck.
- Strive for a clean entry (no plonking) by maintaining the paddle perpendicular to the canoe and entering the water at the speed of the canoe.
- At this stage you are not pulling the canoe, just getting the blade planted.

3) Catch Phase

This phase commences once the full blade is in the water and can be considered as the preparation for the power phase. It delivers lift to the canoe and minimizes drag on the canoe. **Pull** the canoe through the water.

- Start body rotation and apply pressure to the top hand, this moves the canoe forward and creates lift.
 - The paddle shaft moves toward the vertical and becomes fully anchored.
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4) Power Phase

The blade is now aligned with the maximum surface area and the canoe is ready to absorb the surge of power. **Pull** with power.

- Drive with the extended leg.
- Rotate with locked arms.
- Engage abs.
- Rotate the torso at the waist utilizing the large back muscles ie. Lats
- Focus on pulling the canoe through the water creating a power surge.
- Power phase ends at mid-thigh

5) Exit Phase

The Exit phase occurs once the blade reaches the mid-thigh to hip. Leaving the blade in the water past this point increases drag.

- Rotation is complete and the blade is quickly removed from the water by rolling the shoulders to lift the bottom and drop the top hand.
- Some bend naturally occurs in the the bottom arm at this stage.
- There should be no power applied, focus on getting the blade clear out of the water.

6) Recovery Phase

- Relax and recover.
- Twist top wrist to feather the blade over the water.
- Rotate back to the set up position, straightening the bottom arm.
- Keep bottom hand travel parallel and just off the canoe side