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RIVER ADVICE TO PADDLE BY

1. The three most important things to bring a river trip: training, preparedness and common sense. They don't weigh anything, they are easy to pack in your boat, and they don't smell bad after an overnight river trip.
2. Don't go into the river unless you are dressed to play and get wet. When in doubt, dress for immersion. It is much more important to feel good than to look good. (Bring a change of dry clothes in a watertight bag).
3. The river is always the boss.
4. No matter how strong you are, the river is always stronger.
5. Mother Nature plays dirty.
6. The river gives the test, and then teaches the lesson.
7. Having rapids named after you is generally a bad thing.
8. Cold, tired, hungry, stressed-out, intoxicated, high paddlers tend to make bad decisions -- even if they are your friends.
9. Don't paddle it if you can't swim it
10. Portaging around a hazard or rough water is easier and more fun than capsizing, getting hurt or drowning. . . so is scouting ahead.
11. If you are cold, stop to get warm. If you are wet, stop and get dry.
Improper use of rope on the river can kill you. Proper use can save your life.
12. A real river rescue is not a place for on-the-job training. Fear is God's way of letting you know he wants you to stay alive. Pain is God's way of letting you know you are alive.
13. Pain is temporary. Embarrassment is forever.



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SAFE PADDLING TIPS

- Always wear your life jacket and keep it buckled up. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that a PFD can prevent eight in ten boating tragedies. Wearing one is the law in more than half of the states.
- When getting into your boat, have someone hold the boat steady. You don't want to tip the canoe before you even get out on the water.
- Crouch low and keep your knees bent and grab the sides of the canoe for balance as you move to your seat.
- Always walk along the center of your canoe; keeping your feet on the centerline will help keep the canoe from rocking.
- Stay low. Do not stand up or walk in your canoe when you are away from shore. Avoid sudden or jerky movements that can tip over your boat.
- Always sit on the seats or on the canoe bottom in the center of the canoe. Sitting on the sides of a canoe will cause it to tip over.
- Don't paddle alone. It's best to have at least one other paddler and one other boat with you.
- Tell someone about your trip before you go (where you will put in and take out and your ETA to the finish).
- Carry a fully charged cell phone in a waterproof container to use to call for help in an emergency.
- If you are not an experienced paddler, with proper safety equipment, do not paddle when the river is high and fast and cold.
- Learn to read the river's surface (ripples, rapids, currents) for hidden submerged objects. When possible stay far away from downed trees and other obstructions in the water. If the current starts to pull you faster or you see lots of rocks in the water, paddle away from them or towards shore.
- Avoid letting big waves hit the side of your boat. Always try to keep your boat at a right angle to the waves so they don't tip your boat over.



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- Designate a driver. Alcohol figures in roughly half of the reported boating accidents. Save the alcohol for after the paddle.
- Know your boat's safe carrying capacity. Capsizing is often the result of overloaded or improperly loaded boats. Check the capacity plates on your boat or consult your owner's manual.
- Stay away from low hanging trees and branches near shore.
- Never try to paddle over a dam, no matter how small it is. Instead, get out and carry your boat, over land, to the downstream side of the dam.
- Do not paddle in bad weather, especially lightening storms.
- Take a boating basics or refresher course. You're never too old to learn!

IF YOUR BOAT TIPS OVER

- Don't panic.
- Stay with your boat.
- Paddle or push your boat to shore. It will float even if it's full of water. On shore or in shallow water near show, flip over your boat to dump out the water.