

VBAC Freshwater Kayaking Tips 101



If you are a kayaking novice, a good foundation of helpful tips is more prudent than an unplanned immersion into the sport of kayak fishing. Kayaking is as simple as riding a bike – it may look difficult at first, but it is not as complicated as it looks. By combining these basic tips with a bit of hard work, you will be ready to fish with the best of them!

Get a Lesson. You might think kayaking is an easy sport and only requires padding, but that is a misconception. Without proper knowledge, the average novice will struggle tire very easily. I recommend learning the basics of kayaking from a professional kayaker to create a strong foundation *before* fishing.

Go with Experience. Avoid the temptation of going it alone at first. Instead, tag along with an experienced kayak fisherman. Friends and family are great, or simply engage with local meet-up groups and/or kayaking enthusiasts. Having an experienced kayak fisherman alongside will keep you motivated about hunting the fish and is a great way to learn fish hunting skills from a kayak.

Choosing the Right Kayak. It is extremely important to choose the right type of kayak *before* going into freshwater to hunt fish. A variety of fishing kayaks are available on the market. If you are planning to fish in ponds and lakes only, buy the kayak best suited for that environment. The same case goes for rivers, streams, estuaries, or open ocean waters.

Fishing Kayak Characteristics. Owning a suitable type of fishing kayak is not enough. Consider other key factors such as length, size, construction, storage compartments, rod holders, and keel design before you go on to buy a fishing kayak. Know the difference between foot paddles and conventional paddles!

Sit Properly. Before you go out for the very first time, master the art of sitting properly in a kayak. This is the key to maintaining the balance of the boat and avoiding fatigue. Sit straight with the lower area of back and buttocks forming a 90° angle. After a while, it will become second nature, so master this form.

Know How to Change Direction. Sounds simple, but this is critical and not always intuitive to the kayaking novice. Mastering the basic ability to turn the kayak effectively greatly enhances fish hunting success and increases opportunities to efficiently hunt down a large amount of fish. Learning drifting techniques will also enable you to change the direction of your kayak quickly to pursue a sighted fish.

Familiarize Yourself with upwind paddling. If fishing upwind, paddling becomes efficiency suffers, and it may become difficult to stay focused on fishing effectively. Before embarking on a freshwater kayak fishing adventure, be sure to familiarize yourself with upwind paddling to optimize success.

Packing for the Trip. Pack the lightest things possible. The lighter your cargo, the easier it will be to handle the kayak. Carry important things such as food, water, car keys, wallet, and medication. Store these essential items in a small dry bag and secure in hold or rack in the kayak.

Dress for the Water, Not the Weather. The most important thing to consider when dressing for the trip is water temperature. Make sure you dress properly before heading out on the water – cold or hot!

Always Wear a Buoyancy Aid. Buoyancy aids are life jackets for kayakers and are designed to allow unrestricted movement while paddling. This equipment will keep you afloat in case of an emergency!

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