

# Exercises to Strengthen Your Kayak Rolling Technique



## **A kayak roll is used to turn a kayak after it capsizes.**

The kayak roll, also called the Eskimo roll, is a technique used to turn a kayak over when it capsizes. The technique relies on a “hip snap,” which is a quick movement using core muscles to snap it into an upright position while remaining seated in the kayak. Implementing the roll also requires coordinated movements with the paddle and the ability to stay calm under water, but exercising your core muscles will improve your ability to roll the kayak.

## **Core Muscles**

Core muscles are important for body movements, whether you are doing a kayak roll or performing your daily activities. You should focus on your abdominal and back muscles when doing exercises to improve your kayak rolling technique. To maximize your time, focus on compound exercises that strengthen more than one muscle group during the workout.

## **Abdominals**

A side crunch with leg lifts exercises your abs and hip flexors. Lie on your side with your legs straight, with the arm on the floor bent across your stomach and the upper arm bent at the elbow, with the hand slightly touching your head. In one motion, lift your upper leg while bending at the waist and reaching toward the leg with the upper elbow. Repeat on both sides.

Twisting sit ups work the abs and lower back. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Tuck your hands behind your neck and, as you raise up your torso, reach your left elbow over toward your right knee. On the next sit up, reverse the motion, reaching your right elbow toward your left knee. Increase the intensity by using a decline bench set at about a 30-degree angle and holding light dumbbells. Hold the dumbbells with palms up and elbows bent, then, when you sit up, extend the left arm to reach the right knee. Repeat on the opposite side.

In addition, consider balance ball crunches, planks and hanging leg lifts to round out your ab strengthening workout.

## **Back**

Your lumbar spine can get achy from sitting in a kayak for even an hour. It's as important to strengthen your back muscles as your core if you want to develop an efficient and effective kayak

rolling technique. Rowing exercises work your back whether you use a rowing machine, a pull-down machine or a bench. Using any bench, put the weights on the floor at one end of the bench and lie face down on the bench. Put your feet flat on the floor if you need more support. Grip the weights, keeping your head up and looking straight ahead, and slowly raise the weights toward your chest. Keeping your elbows in, lift the weights as high as possible, then squeeze your shoulder blades, hold for a few seconds, and slowly lower the weights.

## Practice Rolls

Strengthen muscles used during a kayak roll by practicing with your kayak on dry land. Sit in the kayak, hold the paddle with both hands and raise it to shoulder height. Use your trunk muscles to gently rock the kayak sideways until it rolls over on its side. Continue to use your trunk muscles to keep the kayak balanced on its side and hold the position as long as possible. If you need to, use the paddle to gain balance when you first tip the kayak over.