

Coach's Corner by Chris Crain

BOW RUDDER

When turning a moving kayak, we tend to use stern rudders, which slowly skids the rear of the kayak around, generally with much loss of momentum. Add another tool to your toolkit!

The next time you're out, work on your bow rudder, which pulls the nose of your boat around. It will turn your boat much more quickly than a stern rudder, with more precision and less loss of momentum (and it looks cooler, too). It's particularly useful for close-in maneuvering and blends nicely with subsequent active strokes such as the forward stroke or bow draw.

The stroke is a static one, for which you first need forward momentum. Begin by submerging your paddle blade close to the kayak on the side to which you want to turn, between your knees and feet. The paddle should be held as vertical as possible, with the power face of the blade starting fairly parallel to the boat hull (don't overexpose it when planting), immediately after which the wrists are bent back to open the power face of the paddle to the oncoming water. Hold the paddle firmly in place and the kayak will pull strongly toward that side. Once on your new heading, transition the planted paddle to a forward stroke and be on your way, leaving your fellow paddlers in awe and in your wake. To make the bow rudder more efficient, try first initiating it with an offside edge and sweep.

Check out the following two video clips to see things in action:

The bow Draw - Sea Kayak Technique

<https://youtu.be/iGmQjKKuh10>

Bow Rudder for Web

<https://youtu.be/CmnDK8FJQLQ>

