

Coach's Corner *by Chris Crain*

LATERAL STROKES (aka Draw Strokes)

Kayaks generally move toward one pointy end or the other, but differ from almost all vessels in their ability to also move sideways under control. That lateral movement is very useful in maneuvering up beside a dock, moving sideways toward another paddler, maneuvering around an obstacle, etc, and is a skill worth adding to your repertoire.



The standard and sculling draws are the most often used lateral strokes, and are generally used to move sideways, while not moving forward. To see these strokes in action, click on the following video link.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=WalmgW-FxWk>

- Standard draw: Begin by rotating your head and torso in the direction you wish to travel ('Face your work'). Reach out and plant the blade in the water perpendicular to your kayak and in line with your hip, keeping the paddle as vertical as possible, which requires reaching across your upper body with your top hand. Once your blade is completely in the water, pull your lower hand toward your hip, keeping your upper hand stationary to act as a pivot point. 6-12 inches before the paddle hits your boat, slice the blade out of the water toward the stern. Then reach out again with the paddle and repeat until reaching your destination. Note: A slightly more difficult variant keeps the paddle blade in the water between strokes, rotating and slicing it out before squaring it up and again pulling toward the kayak.

Caution: If you draw the paddle all the way against the the boat, you may well flip!

- **Sculling draw**: The sculling draw is more powerful than the standard draw, but requires a bit more paddle dexterity. It also begins by rotating your body toward the direction of travel, again holding your paddle shaft as vertically as possible. Then place your paddle blade in the water approx 18 inches off your hip, cock your wrist back to open the blades power face approx 30 degrees, hold your arms steady and use torso rotation to move the blade forward approx two feet. Then quickly flip your wrists backwards to reverse the blade's power face, and use torso rotation in the opposite direction. Use quick back and forth strokes to apply constant sideways pressure. Remember to power with torso rotation, not arm movement.

The **hanging draw** (aka sideslip) is performed when moving forward, pulling the kayak sideways without turning it. The stroke requires that you first establish forward momentum, and is a static stroke. Hold the paddle fairly vertically, placing the blade in the water approx 6-12 inches from the kayak, just off the hip and beginning with the blade face in line with the kayak. Then open the blade's power face slightly to the oncoming water and simply hold the paddle in place while it pulls your kayak sideways. It's easier to see than explain the action, so click on the following link.

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=g641P_YgW_s

Happy sideways paddling!

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