

## Kayak Buying Checklist

	Kayak Comparison		
<b>Initial Considerations</b>			
Is the kayak attractive to you? Does it have nice lines and appealing colors?			
Is the weight OK? Does it balance well on your shoulder? Will you be able to handle it on and off the cartop and carry it to the water?			
How does the seat feel? The thigh braces? The seat back?			
Is there adequate foot room? Do the foot braces adjust easily and feel comfortable?			
If equipped with hatches are the compartments big enough for your gear? Do the covers fit tight? Can you get them on and off reasonably easily? Are the hatch covers tethered so you won't accidentally lose them?			
<b>Test Paddle</b>			
Is it easy to enter the kayak? Keep in mind what other situations you might encounter. A dock? A beach? A bank?			
How's the initial stability? Do you feel stable as you wiggle your hips side to side a little?			
This next question applies mostly to light touring, touring and fitness kayaks. How's the secondary stability? If you are proficient with bracing, you can just heel the boat on edge and feel the force resisting capsize. If you are not skilled in this technique, use a dock or something stationary that you can hold on to as you lean the boat toward the supporting object (dock, etc.). Again, feel the force resisting capsize.			
How well does the kayak track, that is, does it maintain course well? If you have any wind, try paddling with the wind coming from the side. Does the kayak want to turn upwind? Downwind (particularly bad) or does it stay neutral?			
If the boat has a skeg or rudder, deploy the device and test how well it aids tracking. If it's a fitness boat, determine how well the rudder provides steering control.			
If the kayak is not rudder controlled, determine how well it changes direction while underway. Use a couple of sweep stroke on one side of the kayak to see how much the course changes. If you want a quick maneuvering kayak, this will be important. For a cruising kayak, it is a bit less important.			
From a stationary position, test how well the boat accelerates? Does it seem lively or sluggish or something in between?			
How do you feel about the width of the kayak? Do you feel it's too wide to make paddling comfortable and efficient? Is there any tendency to rap your knuckles?			
And now, after doing all this, is the seating still comfortable? If not, would simple modifications solve the problem?			