

# Chelsea Kayak Club *Back-Fit Guide*



The British Canoe Union and Canoe England both emphasise the importance of awareness of injury prevention in paddlesport<sup>1,2</sup>.

It is the responsibility of coaches and session leaders to promote good practice in lifting and carrying of boats, and to provide examples of such practice in day to day paddling activities in the club.

The aims of this guide are as follows:

- To outline 2 manual handling standards
- To provide guidance on lifting and carrying tips for club members, based on these standards
- To ensure the guidance is disseminated to club members to ensure good practice and injury prevention

## Standard 1: Canoe England

Canoe England Highlight Key Areas, Including:

- Lifting and Carrying Canoes and Kayaks
- The Repetitive and Cumulative Nature of Back Injury
- Reducing the Load and Distance of Carrying
- Formulating Plans for the Following Situations:
  - Loading and Unloading Cars and Trailers
  - Carrying Boats and Equipment
  - Dealing with Swamped Boats
  - Rescue (As safety in rescue is taught as part of the FSRT and 4 Star Syllabus this will not be covered by the policy)

They recommend the following:

### Protect The Body:

- Balanced Stance, Close to the Load
- Bend the knees and lift with the thigh muscles
- Avoid twisting by orientating to face the direction you intend to move in
- Look straight ahead before lifting or lowering to improve posture
- Lift and lower with smooth actions

### Make the Task Easier

- Communicate when working in pairs, plan what you intend to do and get the timing right when lifting, to avoid sudden movements or awkward positions
- Use Gravity when lowering, e.g. allow the load to slide to the floor.
- Avoid Asymmetric Loads

## Standard 2: The Health and Safety Executive

- AVOID:** Avoid the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- ASSESS:** Assess the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided
- REDUCE:** Reduce the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable.

### Basic Principles:

1. Reduce the amount of twisting and lifting
2. Make loads easier to grasp, more stable and less damaging to hold
3. Pay particular attention to those who have an existing susceptibility

### Suggested Lifting and Carrying Tips:



Think before lifting. Plan the lift. Will help be needed?  
For a long lift, consider resting midway to change grip.



Keep the load close to the waist (eg grasp the hull of the kayak with both hands rather than the toggle, with one hand, to avoid twisting and keep the load close to the body)



Good posture. Slight bending of the back hips and knees as opposed to squatting or stooping.



Avoid twisting the back or leaning sideways



Don't handle more than can be safely managed – there is a difference between what **CAN** be lifted and what can be **SAFELY** lifted.

## CKC Guidelines:

1. Lifting and lowering kayaks (Getting on and off the water, Thames/ Pool Sessions):
  - Two to a boat for lifting into and out of the water, lifting on to cars and carrying kayaks
  - Posture - knees bent, load near the body
2. Carrying kayaks
  - Empty Kayaks: two people to a boat
  - Where possible, lift the boat by holding the hull with both hands, or using a bandolier strap.
  - Loaded kayaks – at least four people to a boat
3. Empty boats that are full of water
  - Poolside or on the beach:
    - Bend the knees so you are down next to the boat, and tilt it to one side so the water flows out.
    - Once as much water has been removed from the boat as possible, empty the boat by lifting one end (then the other if in pairs).
4. Avoid unnecessary risk
  - If you have a previous back injury, try to avoid lifting if you can. Use other group members to lift together and minimise risk
  - If something does not need lifting then don't move it  
Eg when carrying out repairs, bring the kit to the boat
5. Work together when lifting boats
  - If there are several people around, eg on an evening session, then use other paddlers to help lower your kayak from the pontoon, or lift it out of the water
6. Awareness of injury prevention
  - Be aware of techniques to keep your muscles and joints supple to reduce the risk of injury
  - Keep up to date on the best ways to carry out skills in order to reduce the risk of injury while paddling, for example
    - Keep the paddle moving forward when doing a low brace to reduce jarring
    - Keep elbows tucked in when sculling for support
    - Try not to over-reach when rolling to avoid over-extending your shoulder

## Communication and Dissemination:

1. **The Lifting and Carrying Tips should be emailed to all club members whenever there is an amendment to the Policy, an incident that suggests members need reminding, or when new members join.**
2. **The Lifting and Carrying Tips should be reinforced by session leaders during evening sessions and paddling trips both by prompting and by leading by example.**
3. **A laminated sheet outlining the lifting and carrying tips will be available for all session leaders to refer to.**
4. **Session leaders should actively promote awareness of injury prevention**

## References

1. Injury Prevention In Paddlesport, Canoe England. 2000 <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/BCU%20Injury%20prevention%20and%20Manual%20Handling.pdf>
2. Two Star Trainers Notes, BCU. January 2008 <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/media/pdf/Two%20Satr%20Trainer%20notes.pdf>
3. Getting to Grips with Manual Handling, a short guide. The Health and Safety Executive 2004. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>
4. If you google image search "Safe Kayak Lifting", you will see an example of Jacqui and Miranda



demonstrating communication in lifting a sea kayak! During the Seminar by Howard Jeffs at the Isle of Wight Sea Kayak Symposium. (Although note several deliberate mistakes in our lifting technique!)