

The Kayak T Rescue in detail

This guide summarizes what I've learned about the T rescue, and it outlines the "consensus version" of the rescue introduced at the 2019 BASK Skills Clinic. It covers just the basic rescue of a single sea kayak that has water in the cockpit only. Updated January 2024.

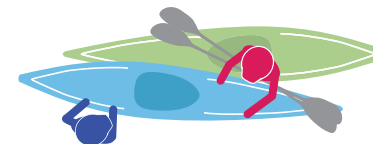
Acknowledgments and disclaimer

The information in this handout originates with the many instructors and fellow BASK members I've learned from. They are the experts; I am not. All errors in this guide are mine, and I look forward to fixing them. Here are some of the people whose instruction and advice is specifically reflected (I hope accurately) in this guide:

Roger Schumann
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Jeff Laxier and Cate Hawthorne of Liquid Fusion
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Todd Johnstone-Wright
Sharon Fleming and Sally Tobin
Nathan Moody
Krista Fechner
Jenn Fury
Joe Berkowitz and other participants in the 10/12/19 T rescue clinic

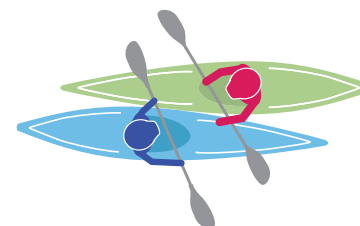
I apologize to the others I've forgotten to list. In some cases, I remember your words, but not who said them.

– Margot Otway



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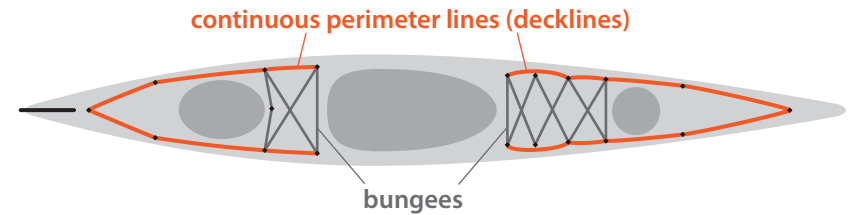
Sixteen pages on the T rescue? Shoot me! -- Susan Snow

Making your boat easy to rescue

Use continuous perimeter lines (decklines)

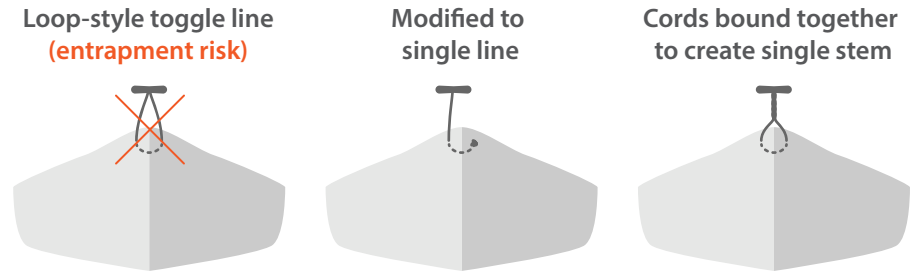
“Continuous decklines” are lines (not bungees) that extend from the deck fitting just in front of the cockpit to near the bow, and from the deck fitting just behind the cockpit to near the stern or rudder. (Sometimes the stern deckline on one side starts just behind the day hatch.) Continuous decklines make the boat easy to hold on to. Without them, rescues are difficult and in some cases impossible.

Not all boats come with continuous decklines. Sometimes the segments just in front of and just behind the cockpit have only bungee. Adding decklines can be a simple matter of threading them through existing deck fittings. Sometimes you have to add or upgrade deck fittings; that is not hard to do.



Use single lines for bow and stern toggles

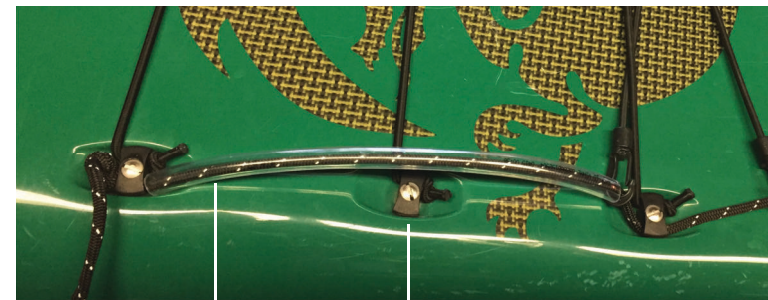
Many boats come with the toggle attached to the bow or stern of the boat by a cord loop. In active water, this creates a very real risk of trapping a finger and twisting it off. You can either replace the loop with a single line or bind the loop together to create a single “stem.”



Make your decklines easy to grab

Most boats come from the manufacturer with tight decklines that are hard to grasp with full-finger gloves (which we use on the west coast because of barnacles). Here are four common ways to make decklines easier to grab:

- If they are painfully skinny, swap in fatter ones; 5 mm is typical.
- Loosen them a bit (not so much as to create an entrapment risk). This may mean buying deckline, because manufacturers usually cut the ends off flush.
- Thread key sections through vinyl tubing to make them fat and grabbable. The tubing is in the plumbing section of the hardware store. An internal diameter of 3/8" will accommodate typical deckline.
- If the deck fittings just in front of the cockpit are closely spaced, skip the middle one to make this critical “handle” easy to grab.



Vinyl tubing

If fittings are close-spaced, decline can skip one for ease of grasping.

Making your boat easy to rescue (p 2 of 2)

No bulkheads? Add flotation!

If your boat does not have bulkheads, the bow and stern must be filled with flotation. This is true even if you use a sea sock. A boat with a flooded bow and/or stern is extremely difficult to rescue.

Fill the empty space fully. If you're camping, your gear may suffice. NRS and other sources sell float bags in various sizes, including "split" bags to flank a skeg box. You can also stuff the volume with pool noodles, or use anything else that works.

Make sure the flotation will not come out if your boat is capsized and tumbling.



Even if you have bulkheads — for active water, fill hatches with flotation

Active water (and canny instructors) are quite capable of popping off flexible rubber hatch covers, especially the big oval ones. To frustrate these bad actors, fill your hatches with flotation, and secure the covers so they won't come off.

Add straps for oval hatches

Oval rubber hatch covers can pop off when active water squeezes your boat. This is particularly a problem for plastic boats (more flexible) and for looser-fitting hatch covers. The rear hatches on Dagger boats (Alchemys and Stratoses) are notorious for this problem.

To keep these hatch covers on, add webbing straps across them. Three options for doing this are shown at right. You may need to add deck fittings. That isn't hard; NRS has a how-to video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKllj-8hL9c>), or you can get your local kayak shop to do the job.

For a hatch cover that might do a Houdini squeeze out from between even two cross straps, you can add a longitudinal tie to join the straps.

Three ways to add a strap across a rear hatch cover (there are others)

Poor choice:

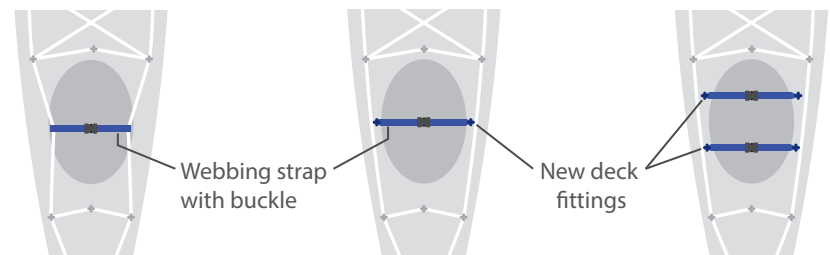
Strap between decklines (pulls decklines too tight; tends to migrate sternward)

Meh choice:

Single strap across hatch between a pair of new deck fittings

Good choice:

Two straps across hatch between pairs of new deck fittings



The T rescue in detail

The T rescue is a landscape

There's no one right way to do a T rescue. The rescue has *many* options. Some are arguably better; some are interchangeable; some have advantages in particular situations or for particular boat or body types.

In other words, the T rescue is a landscape with trade-offs. Any T rescue you do charts a path through this landscape, guided by the situation and by your training and habits.

The trade-offs account for why experienced people have divergent practices — and sometimes divergent opinions — based on what they've learned and the environment in which they usually paddle.

This handout presents one version while covering variations. I cover significant options and variations that I know of or have been taught, but I'm also presenting the rescue as it's usually taught now on the U.S. west coast.

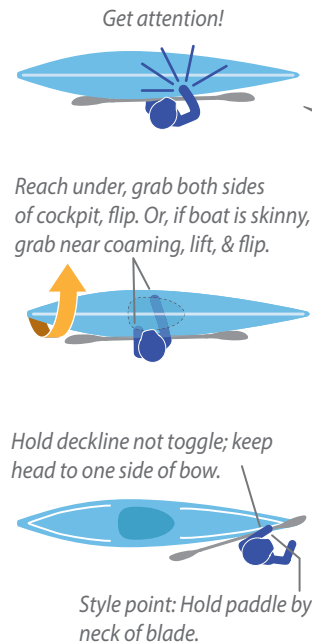
Four actual rules that hold for all T rescues:

- **Protect your shoulder.** When stretched out or back, it's at risk of dislocation.
- **Do what's expedient.** A fast, safe rescue beats a slow, perfect one.
- **Empty the boat from the bow.** Lifting the stern won't empty the cockpit.
- **Don't climb in before your rescuer is ready.**

1. Initiate the rescue

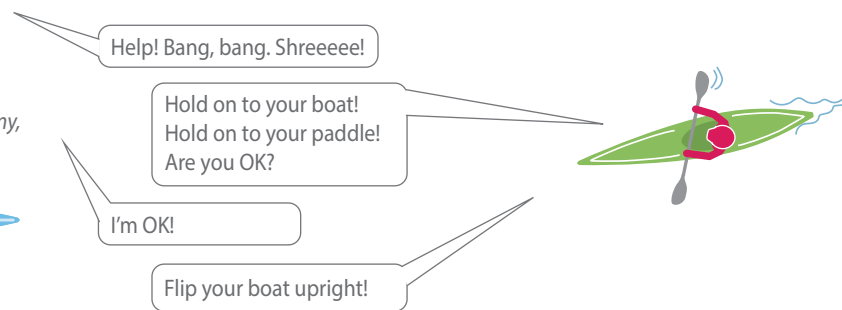
The swimmer's jobs:

- **Hold on to boat and paddle.** Wind can blow boat! Cage paddle under arm(s).
- **Call for help.** Yell, whistle, and/or bang on boat. Hold up paddle if needed.
- **Flip boat upright.** Reach under boat, grab both sides of cockpit, and flip — or, if boat is skinny and light, just lift and flip near coaming.
- **Move to bow,** keeping continuous hold on decklines. This puts you in a good position for the rescuer. Or go to stern if situation requires it.
- **Keep head to one side of bow** to avoid injury from active bow or rescuer's boat. Better to hold deckline than toggle.
- **Assess rescuer.** Will you need to coach rescue?



The rescuer's jobs:

- **Communicate!** Use voice or "OK" arm signal to ask if swimmer is OK. Tell swimmer to hold boat and paddle and to flip boat upright.



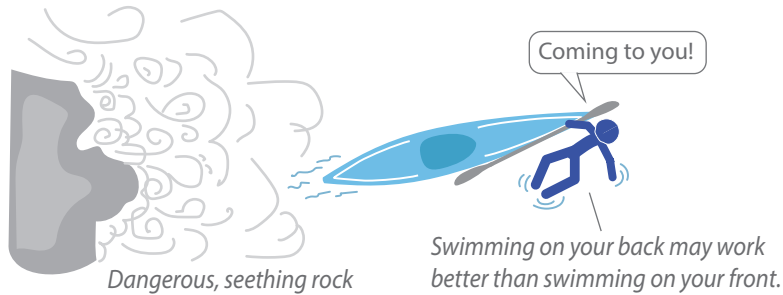
- **Assess situation.** Safe to go in, or tell swimmer to swim boat to you? Yard sale? If swimmer is separated from boat, make a plan. Assign roles as needed.
- **Start assessing swimmer.** Someone you know? Experienced versus newbie? Comfortable in water vs. cold, weak, scared?

2. Capture the boat

Don't create a second swimmer

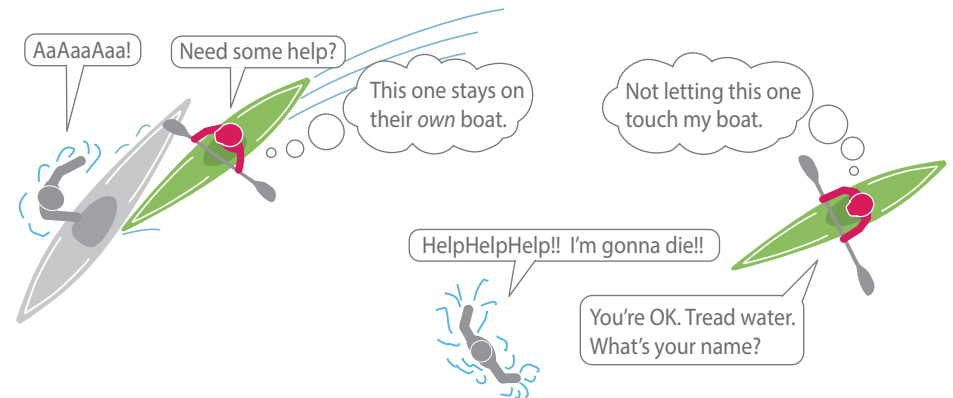
If you capsize in risky water, swim boat to where rescuer can safely come.

If you capsize in active water (e.g., between rocks), swim your boat to a location where your rescuer can safely reach you. Swim it stern first if needed.



Don't let a panicky swimmer grab your boat & capsize you.

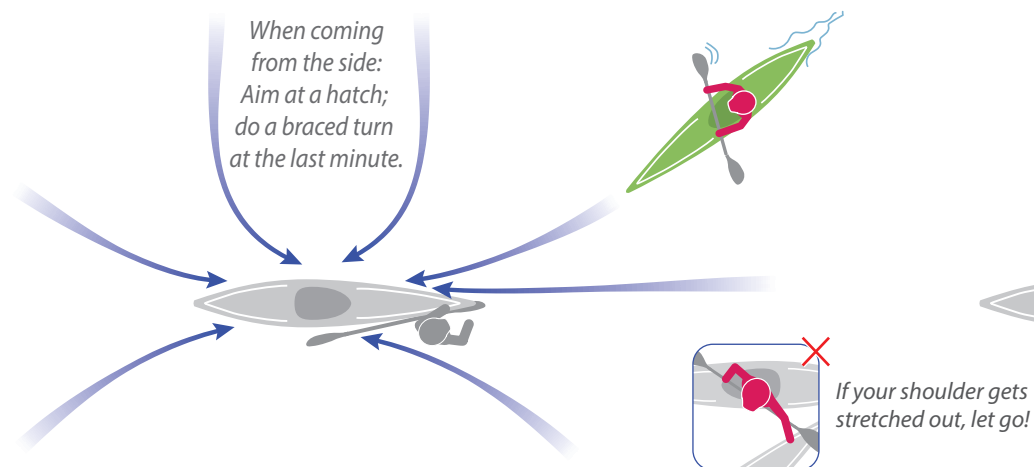
If they are holding their boat, come in on the side opposite them. If they are not holding a boat, keep your distance; talk to them; call for help.



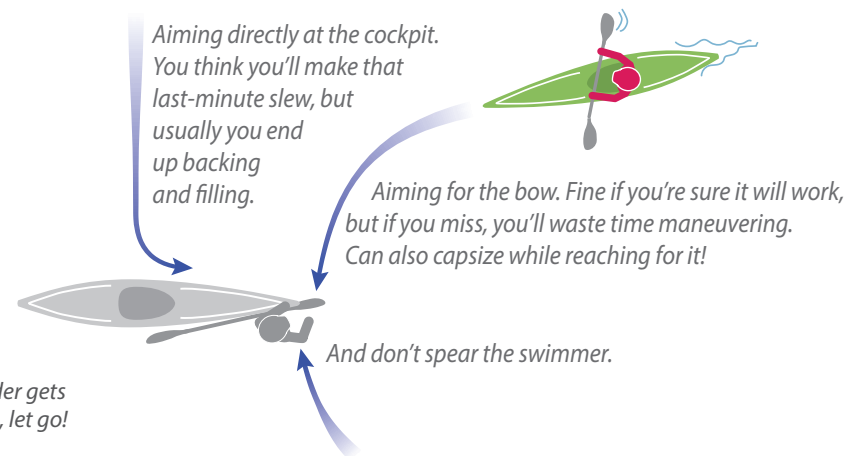
Capture swimmer's boat

The rescuer's goal is to capture the boat expeditiously, and not to miss it, ram it, spear the swimmer, fall in, or have to back and fill. The surest course is to come in at a glancing angle, so that you slide along the boat and can grab the decklines and/or coaming. Then you can move the bow to you.

Reliable choices: Sample trajectories that slide in along the boat:



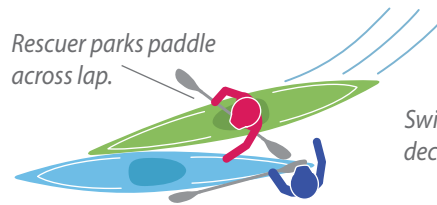
Waffler choices that aim directly at cockpit or bow:



3. Park paddle, park swimmer, establish T configuration

After capture, rescuer parks paddle and swings boats into T position. Usually best to park swimmer on rescuer's decline just in front of or behind cockpit — whichever is expedient.

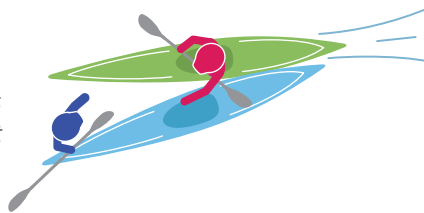
Swimmer who will end up behind cockpit:



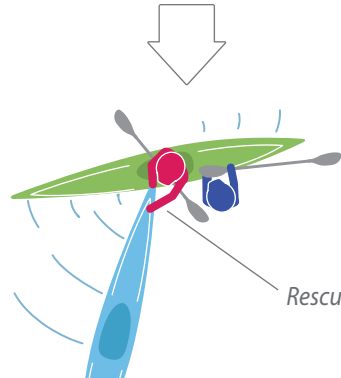
Rescuer parks paddle across lap.

Swimmer transitions to rescuer's decline, keeping hold on a boat the whole time.

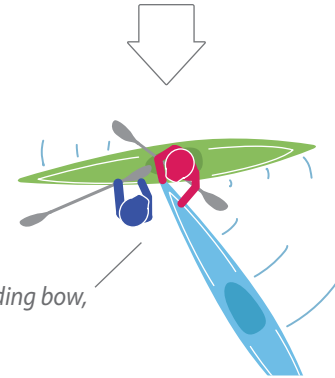
Swimmer who will end up in front of cockpit:



Rescuer swings boats into T, edging own boat.



Rescuer controls boat with one hand guiding bow, other holding decline.

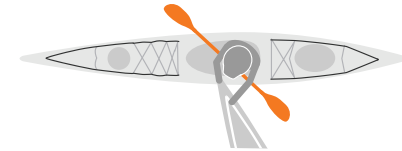


Where to park the paddle: Options

Rescuer must park paddle to have both hands free for swimmer's boat. We prefer the first option.

Across lap, tucked under PFD and/or arm(s):

- Works in all conditions and for all boats.
- Swimmer's paddle will go here anyway, so you may as well learn how to handle a paddle here.



Captured at one end (by decline, bungees, paddle park)

- In big water, loose end can thrash around or get caught under boat, risking injury or capsize.
- Boat dependent: must be figured out & practiced for each boat used.



Where to park the swimmer: Trade-offs

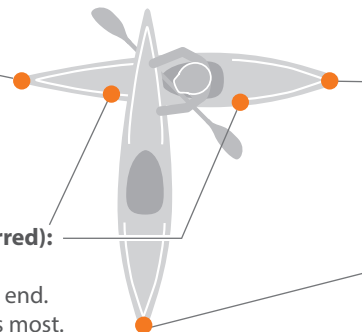
There's no one right place. Do what's expedient and will work in the situation!

On rescuer's bow (with legs wrapped around bow)

- Swimmer cannot easily capsize rescuer, is easy to talk to. Good choice for nervous swimmer.
- In wind, may cause T to fold up. This happens because swimmer anchors one end of rescuer's boat.
- Bow can be jumpy in active water.

Decline just behind or in front of rescuer's cockpit (usually preferred):

- Swimmer is easy to talk to, easy to pick off onto own boat.
- Swimmer is close to center of rescuer's boat, so doesn't anchor one end.
- Position behind cockpit slightly preferable, but expediency matters most.



On rescuer's stern:

No advantages; can cause T to fold up by anchoring one end of rescuer's boat. Use only if expedient.

On swimmer's stern:

Used to be taught. Not recommended now, except at times for Oru boats, where swimmer can help to tilt and empty boat.

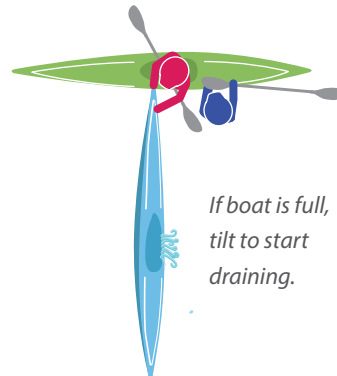
4. Start draining if necessary; get bow onto coaming

If boat is full, drain BEFORE lifting.

Do NOT try to lift a swamped boat onto your deck. If the cockpit contains a lot of water, start tilting to drain while the boat is in the water.

This goes double for boats that lack bulkheads, and it goes triple for Orus. Lifting an Oru before mostly draining it can snap the boat.

Tilt the cockpit toward you so you can see what's happening; take it slow.



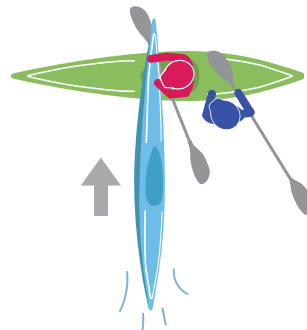
Bounce or jump the boat onto your coaming.

To get the boat on your deck, use "push and leap" or "Kiwi bounce" techniques, and/or lift it with your edge. Don't haul with your arms.

Slide the boat onto your lap the minimum distance needed.

Slide the boat just until the cockpit clears the water — typically to around the level of the front hatch, or until the bow projects a bit beyond your deck. Sliding it further isn't needed and can be counterproductive.

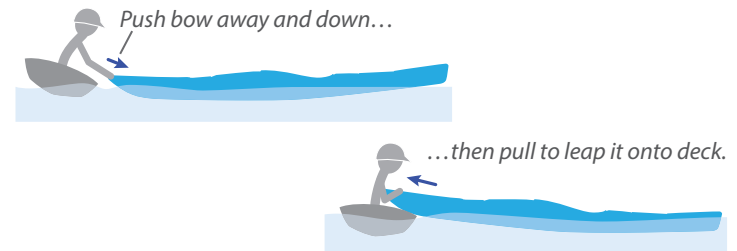
Continue tilting to drain if needed. Boats with keels often slide more easily if tilted on their side anyway.



Three ways to get the bow onto your coaming:

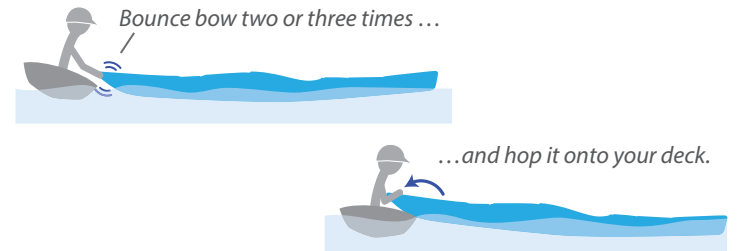
"Push and leap": Push bow away, then leap it onto coaming.

Fast & easy, and the motion tends to engage your edge to help.



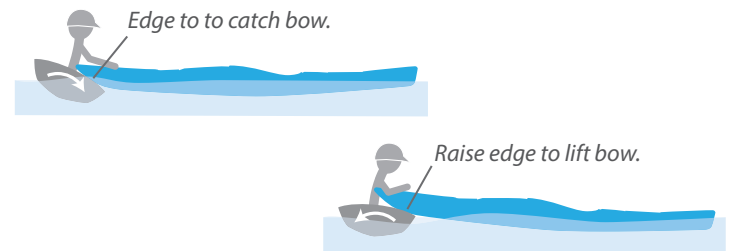
"Kiwi bounce": Bounce bow, then hop it onto coaming.

Similar to preceding, but with extra bouncing for oomph.



... And/or use your edge to get the bow onto your coaming.

Your edge alone can lift the bow onto your boat. Works best if you weigh a lot and/or the swimmer's boat is light.



5. Flip boat, empty it, flip it back upright

Flip boat:

Rotate deck toward you; "pull and push" to flip boat in your lap (rather than on top of you).

Rotate deck toward you.



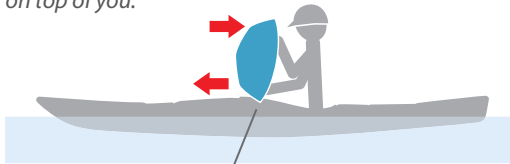
Rotating the boat away from you can also work.

We don't teach it because:

- Boat could hit swimmer parked in front of cockpit.
- Tricky to do if boat is wide relative to your height at the point where you hold it.
- You can't observe the cockpit emptying.

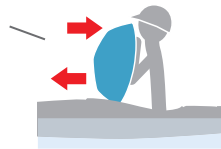
Pull and push to flip boat completely over:

As best you can, **pull** upper edge of boat toward you while **pushing** lower edge away, to rotate boat in place — rather than rolling it over on top of you.



To do this, you can:

- Pull with upper hand, push with lower.
- Or use both hands to pull on upper decklines while using elbows to push lower down.



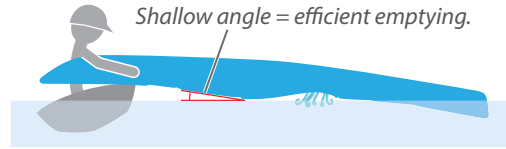
It's OK to roll the boat partly onto you, but nobody wants to end up like this.



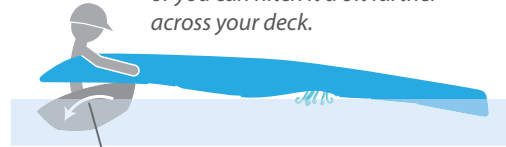
Empty boat:

Raise the bow just till the cockpit clears the water. That's all you need to empty the boat.

Shallow angle = efficient emptying.

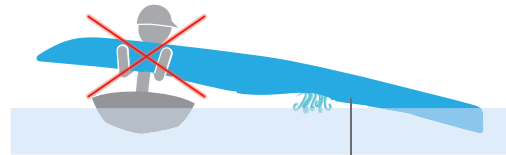


You can lift the bow just by edging, or you can hitch it a bit farther across your deck.



Edging

You can do this if you're big & strong, but there's no need to.



If boat has space between rear coaming and bulkhead (e.g., Alchemy, Stratos), raising bow too much will trap water there.

Flip boat back upright

... without scooping water back into the cockpit.

If boat might scoop water with coaming when righted, edge more strongly, or hitch it a little farther onto your deck.



Flip it upright.



6. Slide boat off deck; orient for swimmer reentry

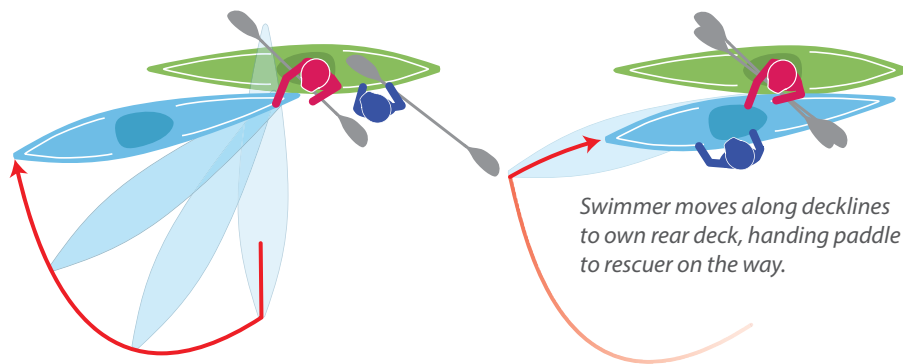
It's faster for you to maneuver the swimmer's boat than for the swimmer to move along declines. The moves shown here are designed to "pick off" the swimmer onto their own declines.

If swimmer is behind rescuer:

Slide bow toward your stern, pick off swimmer, end up bow-to-stern:

Slide boat off your deck; then swivel it so its bow faces your stern...

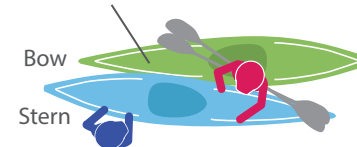
... and slide bow toward your stern to "pick off" swimmer.



Bow-to-stern versus bow-to-bow for reentry:

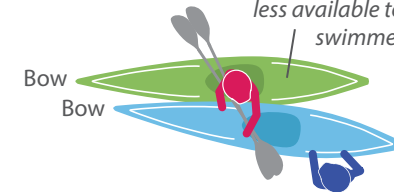
Bow-to-stern

Rescuer's front deck is easy for swimmer to grab.



Bow-to-bow

Rescuer's rear deck is less available to swimmer.



Bow to stern: Best option. Orienting the boats bow-to-stern puts more of the rescuer's boat next to the swimmer's back deck, aiding reentry (particularly valuable when short boat rescues longer one). It also makes the swimmer easy to see and talk to.

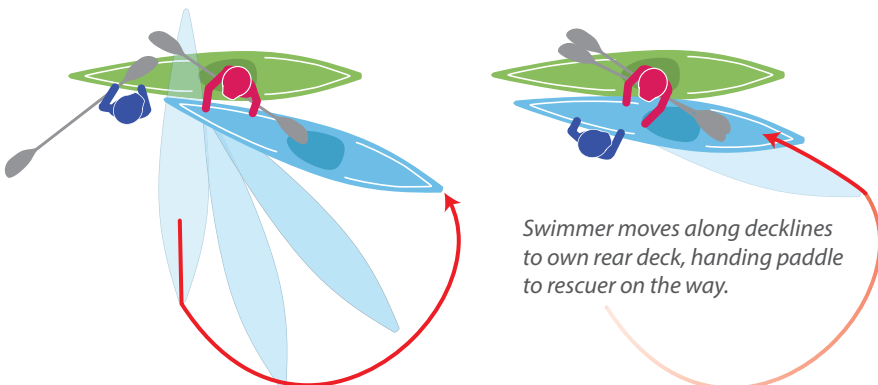
Bow-to-bow works too; preferred when expedient. When swimmer is parked in front of rescuer, expediency usually favors bow-to-bow.

If swimmer is in front of rescuer:

Most expedient: Slide bow forward, pick off swimmer, end up bow-to-bow:

Swivel bow of swimmer's boat toward your bow...

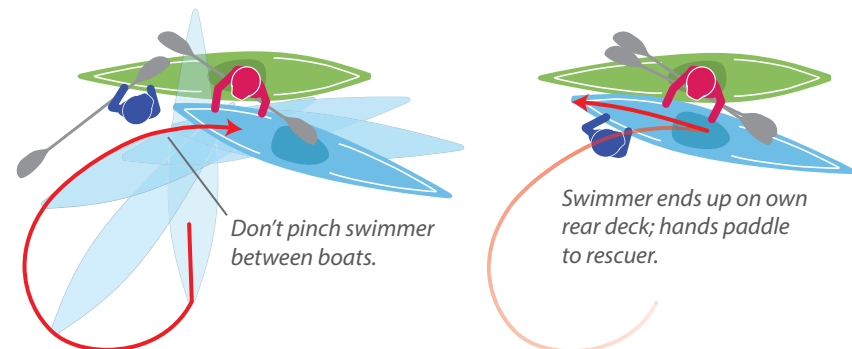
... then slide bow forward to pick off swimmer, ending up bow-to-bow.



More complex "J-turn" maneuver will put you bow-to-stern:

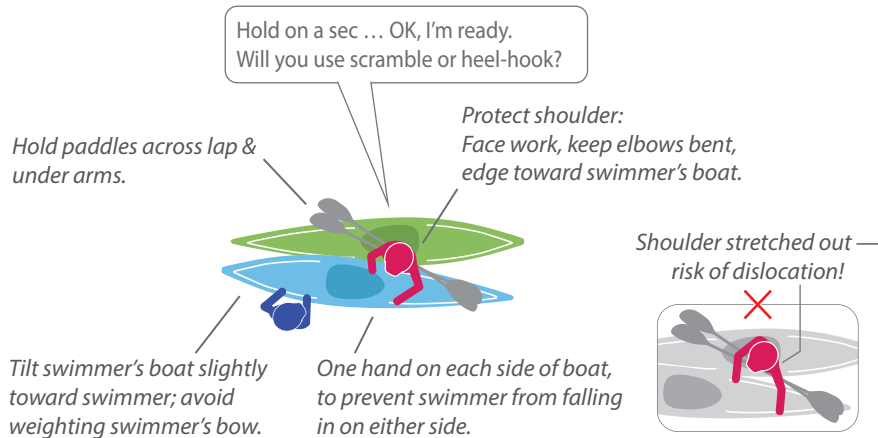
Swivel swimmer's boat so that stern faces your bow ...

... then slide stern forward to pick off swimmer.



7. Hold boat for swimmer to reenter

Goal is to hold the boat steady while protecting your shoulders.



Communicate.

Tell swimmer to wait until you're ready. Ask which reentry method they plan to use. (If you get a blank look, prepare to coach.)

Where to hold the swimmer's boat:

- Hold both sides of boat to prevent swimmer falling in on either side.
- To protect shoulders, rotate to face work & keep both elbows bent. Wide boat, high front deck, stuff on deck can make this challenging. Staggering hands fore-to-aft helps. See grip options at right.
- Edging helps you face your work and makes your declines easy for swimmer to grab. However, big water can forcibly separate the boats, causing you to capsize between them; if this is a risk, stay upright.

Hold boat so as to help the swimmer.

- Make your declines easy to grab: Rotate your boat so your deck is parallel to swimmer's stern (rather than swinging out); edge your boat if safe.
- Tilt swimmer's deck slightly toward swimmer, and don't put your weight on swimmer's bow — would tend to raise their stern.

Place paddles under not over arm(s).

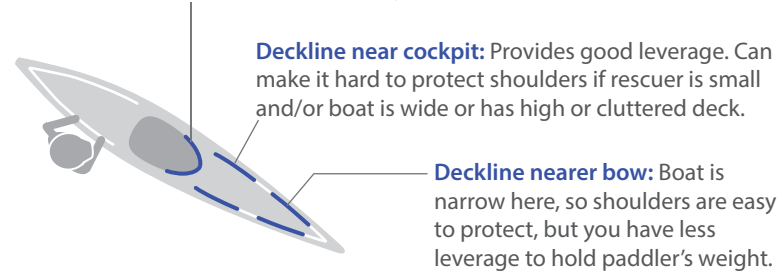
- Placing them over an arm risks a broken arm.

Options for holding the swimmer's boat

Where to grip

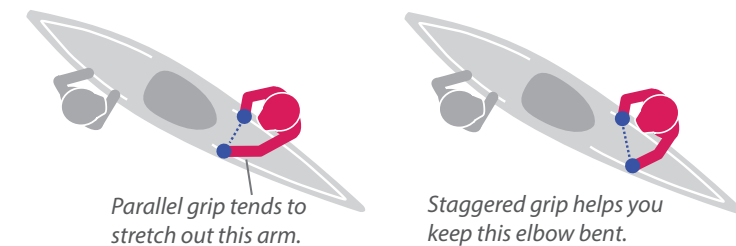
You can hold the coaming, declines near the cockpit, declines farther forward, or a mix. What works will depend on the swimmer's boat, the swimmer's weight, and your own height, strength, and arm length.

Coaming: Easy to hold and gives good leverage, but hand can get kicked. Tell the swimmer that your hand is there.



Stagger hands fore-to-aft to help protect shoulder

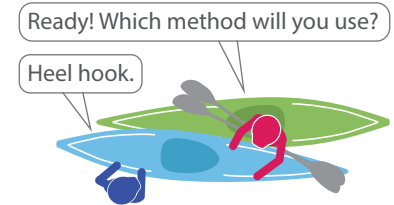
Staggering the two hands fore-to-aft makes it easier to keep both elbows bent.



8: Reenter boat

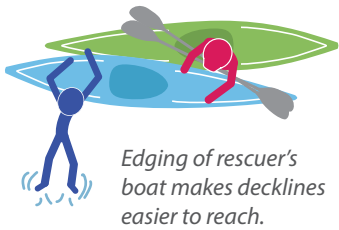
To re-enter the boat, you can use the scramble or heel-hook method, whichever you prefer.

Wait until rescuer is ready.



Scramble reentry Can be difficult if back deck is high or rounded or if swimmer has bulky PFD and/or limited upper-body strength.

Kick legs to surface; reach to grab rescuer's decklines if possible.



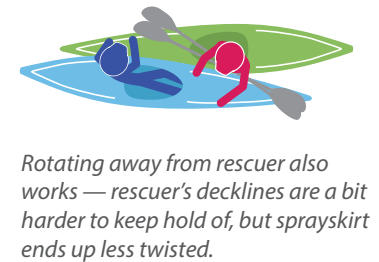
Lunge onto deck, using rescuer's decklines. Keep grip on those decklines.



Insert legs into cockpit one at a time.



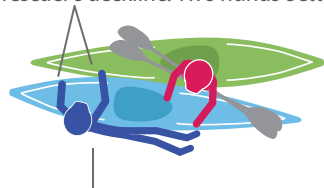
Wriggle into cockpit, & rotate toward rescuer to sit down.



Heel hook reentry Easier for some boats & swimmers, but can demand more strength from rescuer. See next page for more info.

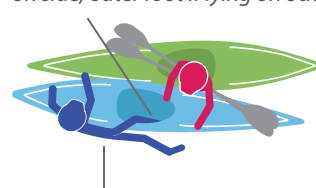
Stretch out next to boat, head toward stern, hips close to boat.

At least one hand on your far deckline and/or rescuer's deckline. Two hands better.



Hook foot under coaming.

Hook coaming with upper foot if lying on side; outer foot if lying on back.



Straighten leg to roll hips up onto boat. Pull on decklines to bring torso along with hips.



Insert second leg into cockpit; wriggle butt into cockpit; rotate toward rescuer, and sit up.



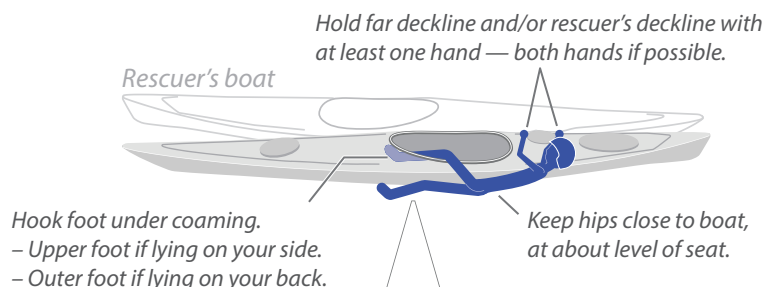
More about the heel hook

How the heel-hook works

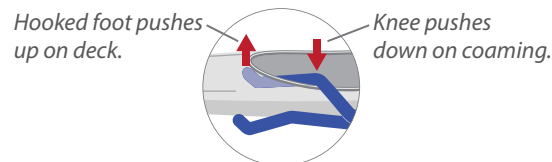
The mechanics of a heel-hook are the same whether you're doing it in the context of a T rescue or a paddle-float rescue.

Set up

Key to the heel hook are hooking one foot under the coaming and getting at least one hand on the far deckline or rescuer's deckline:



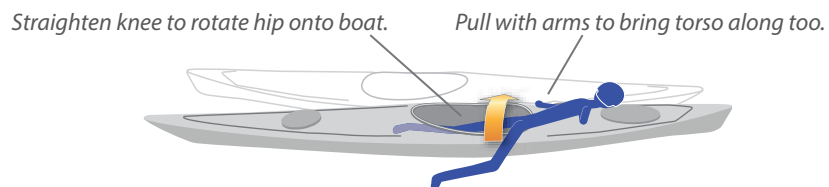
The key:



The hooked foot pins the shin!

Execution

Because the shin is pinned (and the knee bends only in one plane), straightening the leg forces the hip to rotate up onto the boat. The arms pull the torso and head along with the hip.



Options & troubleshooting

Set up position: Lying on side versus lying on back

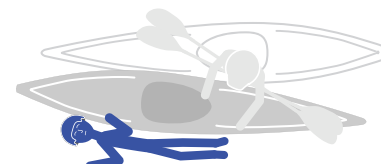
People are often taught to set up a heel hook by lying on their back next to the boat and putting the outside leg into the cockpit. We prefer to set up lying on the side because this position makes it easier to remember which foot hooks onto coaming and to remember to get hand(s) on far decklines and keep hips close to boat.

Set up on side



Upper leg goes into cockpit.
- Easy to remember which leg to use.
- Easy to position arms & hips.

Set up on back



Outer leg goes into cockpit.
- Easy to get confused, put wrong leg in cockpit, stick butt out.

“Cowgirl-style” heel hook (rotate butt straight into seat)

If you set up farther toward the bow than for a “standard” heel-hook, you can rotate your butt 270° directly into the seat, instead of rotating your torso onto the back deck and then wriggling backward into the cockpit. (Hence, this heel-hook version is analogous to the “cowgirl” version of a scramble self-rescue.) After rotating into the seat, you bring the second leg into the cockpit.

This version can be used in the context of either a T rescue or a paddle-float self-rescue.

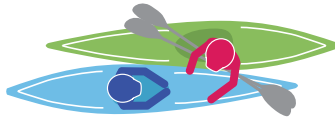
Troubleshooting

- **Keep foot hooked!** Foot must stay hooked while knee straightens to bring hip onto deck. This way, the work is done by the big leg muscles.
- **Keep hips close to boat.** Letting the butt jackknife out adds torque and makes the rescue a lot harder 😞. Stretch out next to the boat; don't scrunch your head toward the cockpit.
- **Hold far deckline and/or rescuer's deckline.** The role of the arm(s) is to pull, not lift. Using both arms can be a game-changer. Exception: For heel hook in context of paddle-float self-rescue, the arm that is on the paddle shaft does some lifting.

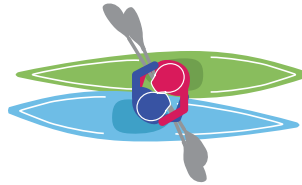
9: Finish rescue

Rescuer:

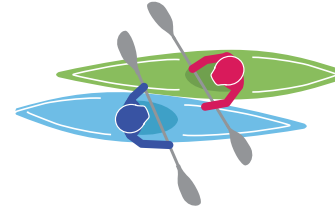
Continue holding on.



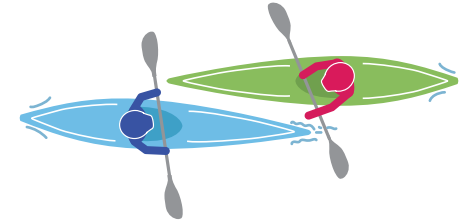
Assess swimmer. OK to let go?
If you want: Hug for final assessment & reassurance.



If ready to let go, hand over paddle...



... and push boats gently apart lengthwise. (pushing sideways could destabilize former swimmer.)



Swimmer:

Get organized, pump if needed, attach spraydeck.

Self-assess. Are you fully ready to let go? Or actually not? Don't risk second capsize.

Take paddle ...

... and off you go!

Some other ways to do a T

There are many other ways to do a T. Here are just a few.

T rescue for an Oru or skin-on-frame

Even if fully float-bagged, these boats can ship water until they're hugely heavy. Attempting to lift before emptying can snap the boat. Tilt them to drain most of the water out **before** lifting bow onto deck. The bow and stern and the central deck seam of an Oru are not fully watertight; you can make use of this fact to drain water through them. It may be useful to put the swimmer on the stern of their boat during this phase, so they can help tilt and empty.

Be careful when sliding an Oru onto your lap; its deck is snaggy and can abrade a sprayskirt.

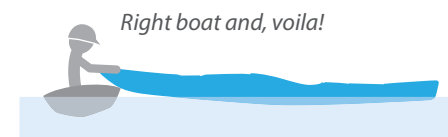
For an Oru, a heel-hook reentry is generally best — it puts the swimmer's weight further forward, where the boat has more flotation.

Swimmer reenters between boats, or over rescuer's back deck, or uses a stirrup.

If the swimmer will have difficulty reentering their own boat directly, they can come in over the rescuer's back deck (which is likely to be lower), or they can get between the boats and lever legs and butt into cockpit. (A paddle shaft laid across the boats can aid in this.) If you have a stirrup, you can deploy it.

Leave swimmer's boat upside down.

Nice when it works... Instead of having the swimmer flip their boat upright, just edge to catch its overturned bow on your coaming, and then edge the other way to lift and drain it (pulling it farther up if needed). **Advantage:** Fast when it works. **Downsides:** Does not work for tall bows. Overturned hull can be slippery & hard to hold — rescuer may capsize while trying to grab it. No opportunity to capture boat by coming in at a glancing angle & grabbing deckline or coaming.

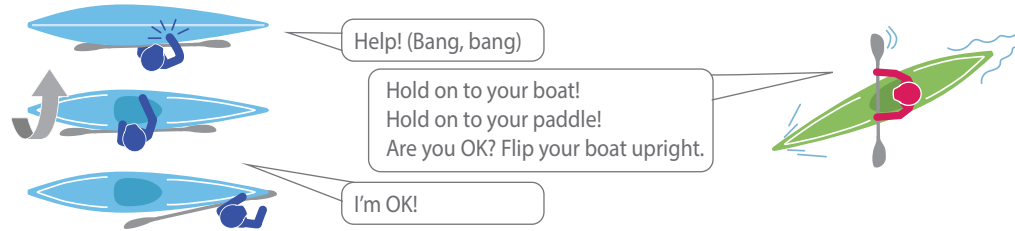


Consensus T rescue — nutshell version, p 1

Initiate rescue

Swimmer:

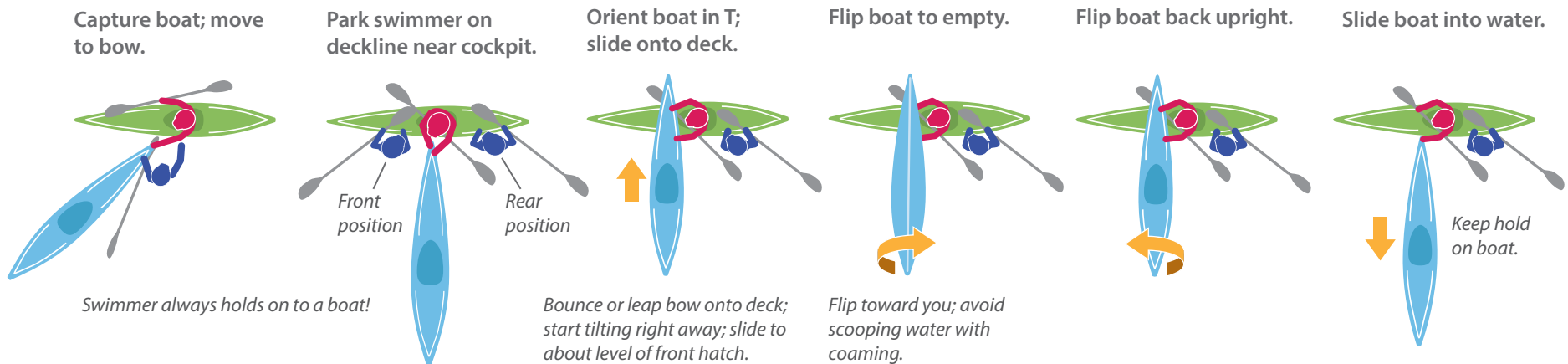
- Wet exit
- Hold boat & paddle
- Yell, whistle, or bang on boat
- Flip boat upright
- Move to front decline



Rescuer:

- Communicate
- Assess situation and swimmer
- Plan as needed

Capture boat, park swimmer, empty boat

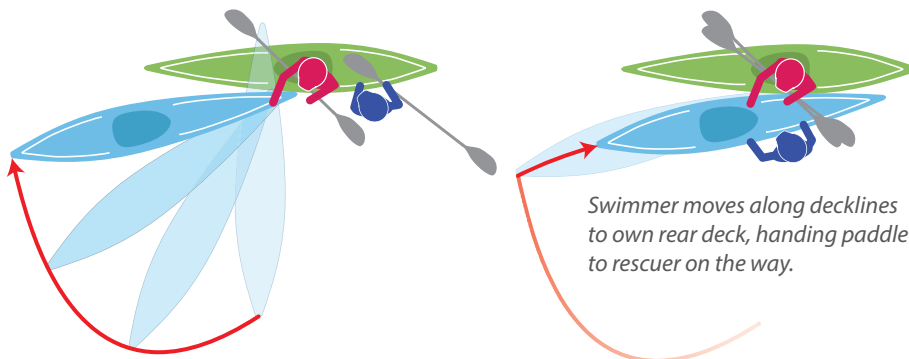


Orient boat for swimmer reentry

If swimmer is behind cockpit: Pick off swimmer; end up bow-to-stern:

Swivel stern of swimmer's boat toward your bow ...

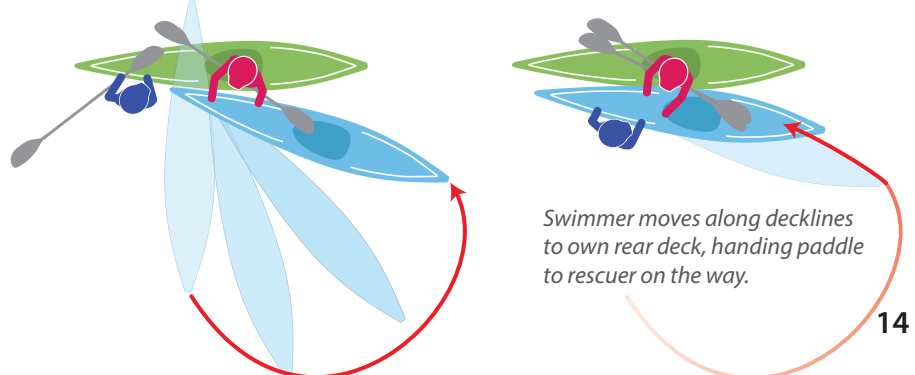
... then slide bow toward your stern to "pick off" swimmer.



If swimmer is in front of cockpit, bow-to-bow is most expedient:

Swivel stern of swimmer's boat toward your stern ...

... then slide bow forward to pick off swimmer.



Consensus T rescue — nutshell version, p 2

Scramble reentry Can be difficult if back deck is high or rounded or if swimmer has bulky PFD and/or limited upper-body strength.

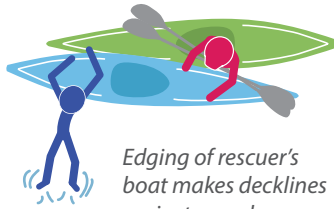
Wait until rescuer is ready.

Ready! Which method will you use?

Scramble.



Kick legs to surface; reach to grab rescuer's decklines if possible.



Edging of rescuer's boat makes decklines easier to reach.

Lunge onto deck, using rescuer's decklines. Keep grip on those decklines.



Kicking legs to surface makes lunge easier.

Insert legs into cockpit one at a time.



Hold on and keep weight low.

Wriggle into cockpit, & rotate toward rescuer to sit down.



Keep grip on rescuer's decklines.

Heel hook reentry Easier for some swimmers, but can demand more strength from rescuer, especially if not performed correctly.

Stretch out next to boat, head toward stern, hips close to boat, hand(s) on far deckline and/or rescuer's deckline



We advise lying on side, tummy facing boat; lying on back is also OK.

Hook coaming with foot. (Upper leg if on side; outer leg if on back.)



Hips still close to boat — don't let butt jackknife out.

Straighten leg to roll hips up onto boat. Pull on decklines to bring torso along with hips.



Insert second leg into cockpit; wriggle back; rotate toward rescuer, and sit down.

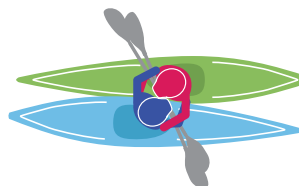


"Cowgirl-style" option rotates butt 270° directly into seat.

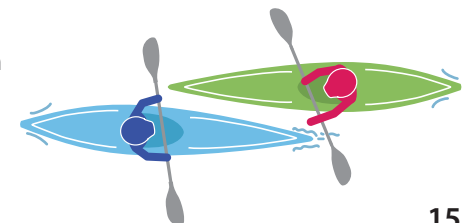
Finish up:

Rescuer: Assess swimmer: OK to let go?

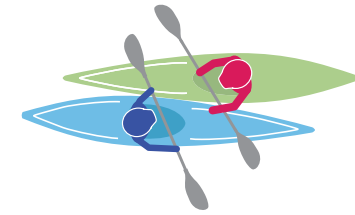
Swimmer: Get organized, fasten spraydeck. Ready to let go?



When ready to let go: Hand over paddle; push boats gently apart lengthwise.



T rescue checklist



Checklist of points that can be selected for particular attention and/or practice:

Rescue initiation

Swimmer:

- Hold boat and paddle.
- Attract attention; request rescue.
- Respond to rescuer's communication.
- Flip boat upright.
- Move along decklines to bow (or stern if necessary).
- If necessary, swim boat out of hazardous location.
- Assess rescuer: Will you need to coach them?

Rescuer:

- Ask swimmer if swimmer is OK (voice or "OK" signal).
- Prompt swimmer to hold boat & paddle and to flip boat upright.
- Assess situation. Safe to go to swimmer? Plan needed?
- Start assessment of swimmer: experience; physical and mental state.

Capturing, emptying, and orienting boat

- Capture boat; move to bow. Hold bow in one hand; deckline in other.
- Transfer & park swimmer in good location. Minimize movement of swimmer along decklines. Swimmer should hold a boat at all times.
- Get boats in T configuration, using edge and core.
- Manage paddle(s); we prefer across lap and under arm(s).
- Get boat on deck (e.g., with "push and leap" or "Kiwi bounce").
- Slide boat the minimum needed for cockpit to clear water when flipped.
- Flip boat to empty (rotate deck toward you), keeping bow no higher than needed for emptying.
- Flip boat back upright. To avoid scooping water with coaming, use edge or slide boat a little farther onto your deck.
- Slide boat back into water (don't let go).
- Orient boat for swimmer reentry. Go bow-to-stern or bow-to-bow, whichever is expedient and will work.
- Pick off swimmer onto swimmer's boat; take their paddle (unless swimmer wants to keep it).

Swimmer reentry & rescue completion

Rescuer:

- Tell swimmer to wait until you're ready. Ask how swimmer plans to reenter; coach if needed.
- Hold decklines or coaming so as to 1) protect shoulders and 2) support swimmer; understand trade-offs for different grip points.
- Arrange paddles across lap under arm(s).
- Orient boats to facilitate reentry. Rotate own boat to make decklines easy to reach; edge to protect shoulders (but avoid edging if big water may pull boats apart); tilt swimmer's boat toward swimmer if useful; avoid raising swimmer's stern by pushing bow down.

Swimmer: scramble reentry

- Swim legs to surface.
- Reach for rescuer's decklines. Hold onto them until in own cockpit.
- Lunge onto deck (pull boat under body).
- Insert legs into cockpit one at a time.
- Wriggle backward into cockpit; rotate to sit up. Rotating toward rescuer preferred, but rotating away from rescuer also works.

Swimmer: heel-hook reentry

- Line up next to boat, head toward stern, hips near seat & close to boat. Prefer lying on side with tummy toward boat; lying on back also OK.
- Grab far decklines (and/or rescuer's decklines) with one or both hands.
- Insert leg into cockpit (upper leg if lying on side; outer leg if on back); hook foot under coaming.
- Straighten leg to rotate hip onto deck; hand(s) pull torso along with hip.
- Wriggle into cockpit; rotate to sit up.
- Or use "Cowgirl" version: Start further forward; rotate butt 270° directly into seat; then bring in other leg.

Rescuer: Complete rescue

- Continue to hold boat & paddles as swimmer gets organized & fastens spraydeck.
- Assess swimmer. OK to let go?
- If OK to release, push boats gently apart along long axis. Or maintain support, arrange for tow if needed.