

Adult Beginners Kayaking & Canoeing Course

Course aims & content

The Adult Beginners course is an introduction to racing kayaking and canoeing – it's both for people with no paddling experience, and those with some experience of other types of kayaking or canoeing eg white water. It's also an introduction to Richmond Canoe Club, so that you can decide whether or not you would like to join at the end of the course. Those who are interested in membership can sign up and continue to the 'improvers' sessions, which also run on Saturday afternoons, and ultimately to other sessions on Saturday mornings, Sundays, Wednesday evenings etc.

In 5 weeks we'll cover:

- the basics of good forward paddling (and racing paddling) technique in kayaks and canoes
- steering and manoeuvring the boat
- safety issues, including capsizing and rescuing yourself and your boat
- the river environment (reading the water, tides etc)
- an introduction to kayak racing and what it's all about, and a chance to try out a few fun short sprints and racing starts

You will have three sessions in racing kayaks (starting with the most stable and progressing to something tippier) and one in canoes. One session will also be indoors on the paddling machines, looking at paddling technique.

Course timing & attendance

The course will run for 5 consecutive Saturdays, from 1.30 – 3.30pm (occasionally there may be a gap of one Saturday to avoid a major race, please check the website for exact dates.)

We expect participants to attend all 5 sessions. If you have to miss a session unavoidably, we may be able to cover the skills you have missed on another day, though we cannot guarantee this. If you have not covered all of the basic skills by the end of the course you may not be able to continue to the next level at the club. If you know that you will not be able to make one of the sessions, please therefore consider booking for another course later in the summer when you can attend every Saturday.

Richmond Canoe Club

Just some words about the club, before you consider signing up for our beginners course. Richmond Canoe Club is a flat water racing club. You definitely don't have to be super-fit to join, and we are a broad and inclusive club (ie the membership ranges from 7 to 70 and from slower/beginner paddlers and fairly relaxed racers to elite competitors), but we do encourage members to paddle every week, and to train - that way you'll see real improvement in your technique, stamina and speed. Some members do other types of paddling (white

water, sea kayaking etc) in their own time, but the club focuses purely on racing. We hope we can enthuse all newcomers with the joy of racing, even those who never thought it would be for them, but if you're sure from the start that you're not going to be able to commit a day a week to the club then we would recommend maybe trying somewhere else first – local clubs that offer weekly sessions on the Thames nearby include Brentford Canoe Club (e-mail bba@BrentfordFCCST.com) and Chiswick Pier Canoe Club (www.chiswickpiercanoeclub.co.uk) You can find others by looking on the Canoe England website (www.canoe-england.org.uk/findaclub.aspx).

If you want to come down to the club to chat to some members and see if you think it could be for you then you'd be most welcome. The best time is c.12 on a Saturday, when a lot of the club members will be around, and there's a galley where you can buy tea/coffee and lunch.

Course booking & payment

Bookings for each course will open approximately 3 weeks before the start date of the course. Exact dates will be given on the Richmond Canoe Club website. To book a place please download the attached booking form, fill it in and e-mail it to lovekayaking@googlemail.com. Bookings will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. You will receive confirmation that you have a place within 5 days.

Payment for the course (£60) must be received one week before the course starts, or your place may be given to someone on the waiting list.

You can pay either:

- by cheque, to Richmond Canoe Club. Please post cheques in an envelope with a copy of your booking form, addressed to: Membership Secretary / Adult Beginners Course, Richmond Canoe Club, 81-83 Petersham Rd, Richmond TW10 6UT)

or

- by cash, in person at Richmond Canoe Club on a Saturday morning. Please e-mail lovekayaking@googlemail.com to make arrangements