

Hudson Valley Pack & Paddle's Know before you go

The Wet Exit

Some day on some trip the inevitable will happen; your kayak will capsize. In a split second you'll go from right side up and dry, to upside down and underwater. Do not be alarmed, you have simply switched from kayaker to swimmer. The first thing you need to know is how to do a proper **wet exit**.

Follow several simple steps and in no time at all you'll be out of your kayak, even if it's flipped and you're underwater. The key is to stay relaxed, knowing that it will only take a few seconds until you're air side up again.

You can read this as often as you like but to really learn how to do a wet exit safely **you must practice!** You should be very comfortable with this skill long before you really need it. So, practice in a safe, warm environment with a partner standing by, ready to help out if you need it.



Remember, always wear your PFD

To Do A Wet Exit

Relax, remember this will only take seconds

Take a breath, tuck forward (kiss the front deck) and capsize

Reach up, your hands out of the water, and slap on the bottom of your kayak a few times to signal to other boaters that you have capsized

Turn your hands perpendicular to your boat, thumbs in and wave them back and forth, bow to stern several times to signal to other boaters that you need an assisted rescue. Signal in this manner as long as you are comfortable holding your breath

If no rescue arrives in time bring your hands down to the cockpit coaming near your hips, run your hands forward along the cockpit coaming until they meet in front of you

Still leaning forward grasp the grab loop of your spray skirt, using your arms pull it forward, with the grab loop in hand then using your body lean back and pop the spray skirt off

Lean forward again put your hands back on the cockpit coaming near your hips and push the kayak off as if you were taking off a pair pants

If your are leaning forward, this will be very easy and will quickly summersault you back to the surface and fresh air

Take a breath, grab your boat and paddle and move on to the rescue of your choice (see kayak rescues)

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