

Kayak Fishing Checklist

By Nicole Nichols-West

Do's

- See your doctor before starting any exercise program or sport that may require physical exertion.
- Take basic kayaking lessons.
- "Try before you buy" when looking to purchase a kayak.
- Know how the different models/sizes/styles handle in the conditions you expect to encounter.
- Purchase a kayak that is bright in color.
- Wear a personal flotation device while paddling.
- Buy the best paddle you can afford.
- Use a paddle leash to retain your paddle to your kayak.
- Have a bilge pump and extra paddle for emergency use.
- Take proper signaling devices and radios.
- Paddle with others while going offshore.
- Take a First-Aid kit with you on the water.
- Use sunscreen to help protect yourself from the sun's rays while on the water.
- Be acutely aware of your surroundings while on the water.
- Take some extra clothing if needed in a dry bag.
- Get accurate weather, wind and tide forecasts before going offshore.
- Practice overturning and re-entering your kayak in a simulated flip over in a controlled setting.
- Have the proper safety equipment.
- Make sure that you know the safety regulations on the body of water that you intend to fish.

Don'ts

- Neglect to see your doctor only to find out you have health issues after you're on the water.
- Risk personal injury while paddling because of an improper paddling stroke or improper equipment.
- Purchase a kayak only because you got a "Good Price" on it.

- Buy used or online without first doing your homework and "test driving" several models.
- Select the color of your kayak as a fashion statement.
- Secure your personal flotation device to your kayak to carry it.
- Lose your paddle while on the water.
- Fail to have a bilge pump or other efficient means to evacuate water from the hull of a kayak.
- Put yourself and others in a potentially dangerous situation because of your lack of experience or knowledge.
- Go offshore by yourself without the proper experience and equipment.
- Become so involved in fishing that you fail to see potential hazards approaching.
- Let your ego overshadow common sense and your personal safety.
- Plan the trip around the strongest paddler, and expect the others to stay up with them.