

Canoe & Kayak Magazine's 2009 Beginner's Guide Issue Featuring the NRS Drylander Universal Sprayskirt



*THE ESSENTIALS

You need a neoprene sprayskirt that fits tightly over the cockpit rim to seal water out.

Pictured: the NRS Drylander Universal Sprayskirt offers a watertight seal and a neoprene deck with an adjustable nylon tunnel that you can take from sea kayak to whitewater boat.

(\$95, NRSWEB.COM)

*WHITewater // GEAR

*RAPID READY

If there was ever a paddling discipline in which to pick your gear battles, that would be whitewater. You can get more than a little bogged down with everything you need to pack. But don't get lost in the paddle pegs and nose plugs. Make sure you fit snugly in your kayak with enough padding for your feet, thighs and hips. Then prioritize your needs with the essential items for running the river. Think about buying and borrowing these items first (and don't forget about that PFD, see p. 54). Later on, you can swap your wool socks and old Converse sneakers for a slick pair of booties.



"THE ESSENTIALS"



Balancing value, performance and the chance you may lose it during a swim factor, into deciding how much to spend on a whitewater kayak paddle. **Pictured:** You'll be hard-pressed to find a more affordable bent-shaft paddle than the Adventure Technology AT4 H-Pro, a light (4.8-oz.) paddle with composite wood shaft and fiberglass shaft and fiberglass-reinforced polypropylene blades that can take the most brutal beating. (201, 271.212.1.018)

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Once you're ready to start running rapids, have some simple pieces of easily accessible rescue equipment. Tying a whistle to a PFD zipper or strap is about as easy as it gets. A one-handed river knife, with its sheath secured to the outside of your PFD on a paddle, acts

as a backup to a pocketed folding knife in an emergency situation. **Pictured:** the compact Oxbow River Story Knife, with a 3-inch blade at only 4 ounces, is a classic example (211, 202.828.018). The last piece would be a throwbag. As you advance to more difficult rapids, an accessible bag of rope worn around the waist is preferable, but a basic throwbag remains essential for any kayaker or rafter. **Pictured:** the Calumet Soloist 65 has 65 feet of 3/8" line with a polypropylene core. (211, 212.264.1119/211.275.018)

Wearing a helmet on any river is a no-brainer. Even though kayaking helmets are designed to take multiple impacts before breaking, don't settle for a hard-earned one. A new, fully protective helmet won't break the bank, and will ensure that you don't break your noggin. **Pictured:** the simple and stylish Pro-Tec Ace Waker Helmet features a high-density ABS shell and a waterproof EVA foam lining. (202, 719.85.111)