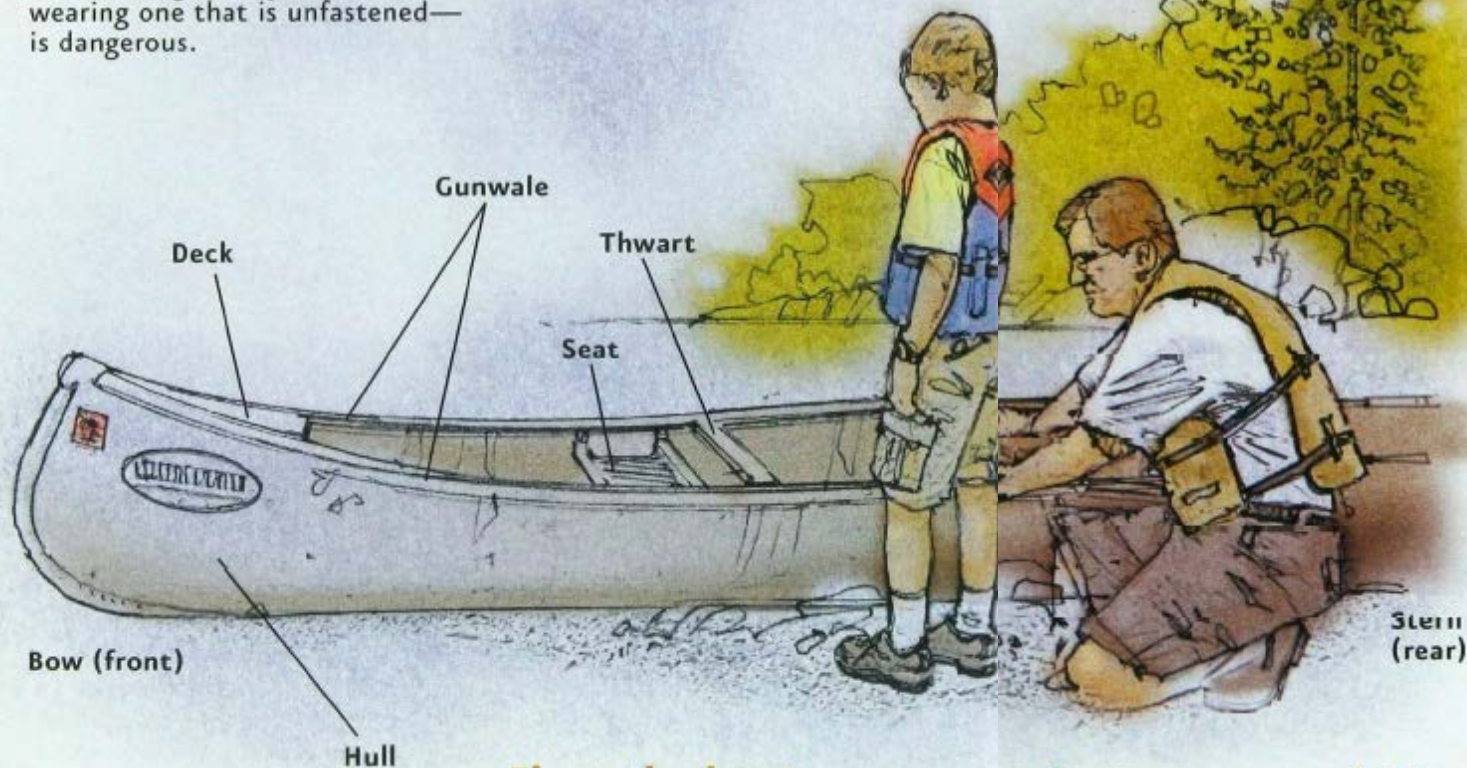


Canoeing Basics

Anyone can paddle a canoe, but not everyone can paddle one well. Training and practice will make you a pro. To look good the first time you step into a canoe, follow these rules:

Wear your life jacket.

Not wearing a life jacket—or wearing one that is unfastened—is dangerous.



Float the boat.

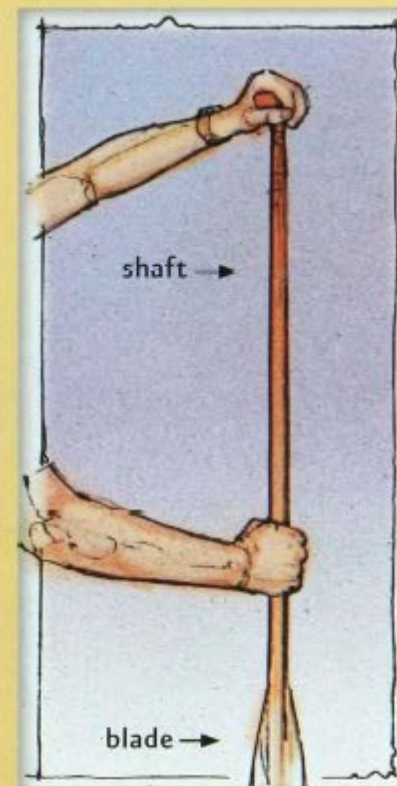
Be sure the canoe is completely floating before you climb into it. Do not climb into or sit in any canoe that is on land, unless it is completely supported by soft sand or grass. Even then, you should ask permission.

Center your weight.

To board the canoe, put one hand on each gunwale, crouch down, and step in. Keep your weight in the center of the canoe. If you step off to one side, you might overturn, or capsize, the canoe.

Choose a paddle.

For a good fit, find a paddle that comes 1 to 2 inches below your chin when you are standing next to it.



Hold the paddle right.

Wrap your upper hand over the top grip. Place your lower hand about a foot above the point where the blade meets the shaft. "Choking" the paddle close to the blade makes you work harder.