

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I do it?

3 yr olds through seniors paddle with Downunder - there is no age limit, you don't even need to know how to swim – you wear a life jacket. Many disabilities can be accommodated, and Westport is handicapped accessible. Those with special needs can especially benefit from kayaking – it is very empowering! 16 years – 18 years may paddle alone with a parent signature on their waiver.

Children and Paddling:

Kayaks and paddle boards can be difficult to maneuver. We have created a set of guidelines for children's paddling safety. Please review them.

Can I take my dog?

Of course, many dogs LOVE going out on kayaks, and yes paddle boards. You do need a lifejacket, however. Downunder sells and rents lifejackets (book ahead) and we'll be happy to help you take off!

Do I need experience?

Basic instruction is provided by our seasoned staff. We do encourage you to take a lesson and learn all the tips and tricks to make your experience the most pleasurable and safe, and we offer guided tours, and guides for hire.

How long do I go out for?

Kayak rentals are a minimum of 2 hours - you don't have to stay out that long! Paddle board rentals are by the hour. Additional hours are charged at hourly rates. 1/2 day and whole day rates available. If you have a combined group - paddle boards and kayaks - we offer a 1 hour rate.

Where do I go?

Check out our Paddling Charts ([Westport / Rowayton](#)) and Guided Tours ([Westport / Rowayton](#)) info on the website. We'll make suggestions based on tide and weather. There's roughly 1 mile of navigable river in Rowayton and 3 in Westport. On both rivers there are creeks and inlets to explore, and both have easy access to Long Island Sound and local islands.

Is it safe?

Absolutely... you'll wear a life jacket complete with emergency whistle and your kayak or SUP is also a flotation device. Just stay out of the boat channel and be vigilant.

Are there rules?

- Wear your life jacket.
- NO ALCOHOL - drinking and watersports don't mix.
- DON'T PADDLE IN THE BOAT CHANNEL - it's for boat traffic and can be dangerous for paddlers.
- Give way to all powered vessels.
- Try to give way to rowers (it's harder for them to turn).
- Be back on time! Your rental starts from the time of your booking - regardless of when you arrive/get on the water. Others may be waiting for your kayak/SUP.

What do I wear?

- a **bathing suit, bring a towel** and change of clothes
- **suntan lotion**
- **hat and sunglasses with straps** recommended – you know, like a croakie
- **water shoes/something you don't mind getting wet or loosing!**
- **paddling gloves** - a comfort item we carry

What should I bring?

- **beverages and snacks** – you will get thirsty and hungry! The Rowayton Market provides food and drink, even kayaker picnic bags. In Westport we have cold water and snack bars, and there are a number of nearby eateries – see the locations page for info on eateries in both places.
- **waterproof cameras** are great, or small camera's in **waterproof bags**.
- **cell phone** - in a waterproof bag. We sell phone specific cases and bags. It's a good idea to take your cell (especially if the weather is iffy) – just turn it off unless you need it :)

What should I expect?

Arrive 1/2 hour early so that you are sure to be on the water in time (parking, paperwork, pit stop, outfitting, and instruction). When you arrive, you'll sign a waiver (under 18 yrs must have a parent signature), use the 'facilities' one last time, put your personal items back in your car and head to the dock for outfitting and instruction.

What about the tides?

At low or near low tide, some paddle areas are limited so our dock hands will make recommendations as to where you should paddle.

What about the weather?

As long as it's not blowing a gale (approx 15mph+) and there's no thunder, you can paddle! Depending on your level of comfort and experience. Paddling in the rain is very soothing. Some people like to paddle in waves. If you're not sure – just give us a call and we'll advise. The rivers are very protected so you can paddle there in most conditions.

Where do I park?

Parking is limited in both locations. Check out the contact us page for directions and info on parking. In Westport any of the commuter lots are available for parking on weekends, and several business along Charles Street are closed, you may use their parking lots.

For answers to these questions and more, [download this form \(pdf\)](#)... and then this one for [parent information \(pdf\)](#).