

► THE COMMON LEGACIES

These can be grouped into 3 areas:

1. Flawed or weak basic techniques and skills.
2. Inability to adapt.
3. Lack of self-awareness.

BAD LEGACY 1. – FLAWED OR WEAK BASIC TECHNIQUE AND SKILLS

As techniques are the basic building blocks, which become adapted and applied skilfully to become 'Skills' then it makes sense that our basic technique should be as perfect as possible. Common errors or weakness in basic techniques often stem from paddlers learning 'cheating' tactics or coping strategies. This is where a technique is learned that enables a paddler to achieve an outcome quickly or with less effort. They get results and are happy, but they haven't learned the best way or process of doing it. Left unchecked the paddler can become highly proficient at the 'coping strategy' and practises it so frequently that eventually it becomes their reaction. The paddler will still get the results they want, particularly where the environment is flat and not too testing. However when put under more pressure, coping strategies are seldom a sufficient substitute for good technique, and ultimately the technique and consequently any future skills based on it are likely to fail.

► Example – Edge Control In A Kayak

A beginner learns a basic version of edging and recovering an off-balance boat using their trunk, hips and legs. In an attempt to hold the boat further and further off balance, they discover that leaning backwards and laying on their rear deck seems to make it easier. This is their 'coping strategy'. This apparent increase in performance is because the paddler's centre of gravity has been lowered by leaning backward therefore allowing them to take the boat further over before reaching the point of no return! Unfortunately, leaning back causes the trunk muscles to be far less effective at hip flicking and thus less effective at righting the boat. This is because when leaning back, the trunk muscle groups are stretched out and are not able to create the necessary hip flicking movement. However the paddler doesn't realise this because on flat water they are able to compensate for the ineffective hip flick by using their shoulder and arm muscles to pull the boat back upright with a strong support stroke or brace. The paddler continues to consolidate this 'coping strategy' through further practice and their natural reaction to being off balance becomes leaning back.

As edge control is fundamental to all support strokes, the paddler imports and adapts this technique into all support strokes, rolling and anything involving hip flicking and edge control. Whilst still on flat water they are likely to maintain a high degree of success due to support from their support strokes. They continue to be successful, unaware that brute strength is making up for the poor technique.

However if they progress on to paddling in white water and/or on the sea they will encounter problems. In these environments the water no longer has as much support as it has a broken surface and is seldom flat. They find themselves failing to support or roll in waves and rapids and consequently they swim a lot. Their coping strategy has reached the limit of its effectiveness, their upper body strength is no match for the sea or river. The only way they will upright their boat is using the powerful trunk and hip muscles, but because they are leaning back these are not able to work properly.

To progress they must go back and relearn the basic fundamentals of hip flicking, edge control and support strokes. They need to remove the instinct to lean back and instead sit upright or forward.

COPING STRATEGIES

It makes sense for the coach to identify the common coping strategies found in paddlers and, based on these, form strategies to prevent them occurring in beginners.

Here are some examples of good technique, common coping strategies, what problems they may cause and how we might proactively prevent them.

► Posture In Edge Control



Photo 1 Upright or forward using edge control.

🕒 **Desirable outcome:** Sitting upright or forward whilst edging/hip flicking allows trunk and core muscles to move unhindered and provide powerful, uprighting movements and effective balance control.



Photo 2 Leaning back using edge control/hip flick.

⊗ **Problems:** Restricts movement - causes trunk muscles to be ineffective, puts reliance on upper body strength; weakens all forms of edging, hip flicking, stability and rolling.

🕒 **Prevention:** Encourage good form and technique in early trunk and edging use, sitting upright or forward. Discourage leaning back in all stability situations.

► Head Position



Photo 3 Head low, towards water when rolling or recovering.

🕒 **Desirable outcome:** Keeping head low, towards the water when rolling or recovering causes good spinal 'C to C' movement, keeps centre of gravity low and allows effortless finish.



Photo 4 Head high reaching away from water when rolling or recovering.

⊗ **Problems:** Head high discourages good spinal hip flicking movement and raises centre of gravity, making recovery harder.

🕒 **Prevention:** Encourage head to be last thing to come out of water/upright when rolling/recovering.

Her vises, og understreges, med al ønskelig tydelig, hvorfor det er så vigtigt at få den rette teknik lært fra starten af. Vi ved alle hvor svært det er at komme af med 'dårlige vaner', når først de ER indlært.