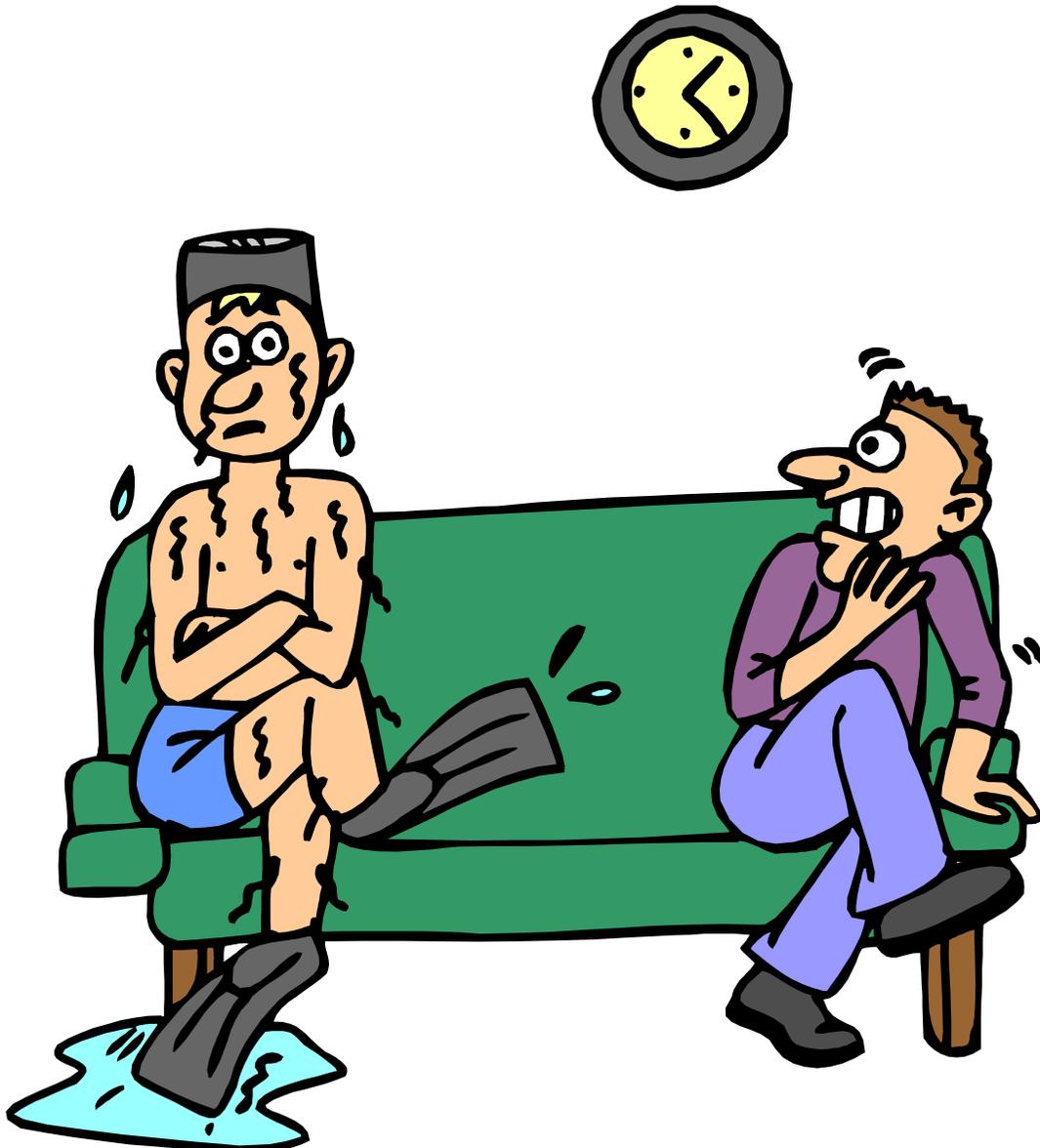


CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT 101



Presented by

WILMINGTON TRAIL CLUB PADDLING SECTION

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT 101

First, the six most important items:

1. Kayak: Protects the body while in the water and helps you float around!

2. Paddle

3. Personal Flotation Device (PFD) (a.k.a. "Life Vest"): The PFD must be properly fitted. It not only keeps you afloat but it also protects your body from harm. The PFD should generally be a "Type III".

4. Sprayskirt: Worn around the waist of a kayaker and closes around the cockpit of the kayak to keep waves and spray from filling the boat. The skirt does very little to hold the kayaker in, and comes with a grab loop for fast "wet" exits. Sprayskirts aren't required on most flatwater trips.

5. Helmet: A paddling specific helmet is essential for whitewater paddling or surf kayaking. Helmets aren't usually required on flatwater trips.

6. Internal flotation bags for the back of the boat. If your boat should capsize, it won't take in as much water. Required on all river trips and some flatwater trips (unless your boat has a sealed bulkhead behind the seat). Not required for the Quickstart Your Kayak course.

Next, clothing and accessories: The items you choose to take on your paddling trips will vary with each excursion. You will need to take into consideration a multitude of factors: air temperature, water temperature, cloud cover, precipitation, remoteness, etc. One rule to follow always--expect to get wet and dress and pack accordingly.

Synthetic t-shirts, Sweaters: Popular for their wicking qualities (drawing water away from your skin) synthetic fibers such as polyester, polypropylene or fleece dry quickly and help keep your body warmth in when it's cold out. You can get these inexpensively at the exercise/sportswear section of Wal-Mart or a department store, or get the more technical gear at EMS. Wool works well too. Cotton is not acceptable because it has the opposite effect of cooling you when it gets wet. Even in the summer, cold water, wind and wet cotton can be a deadly combination. Use synthetic pants, long underwear, or Lycra tights for your lower half too. In warm weather / warm water one layer over a swimsuit may be enough, paired with some kind of outer layer. Bring an extra layer in the boat.

Outer layer: Paddling Jackets are coated nylon jackets that are water and wind repellent to keep splashing water and cooling wind off your skin. Lightweight windbreakers or rain jackets will work but no hoods or bulky jackets.

Wet Suit: Worn right next to your skin, wet suits can be a lifesaver in cold water. The neoprene material holds in a thin layer of water as an insulator. We don't expect people to have wetsuits during training classes.

Footwear: Protect your toes with water shoes (found in K-Mart, Target, etc.), strong river sandals, old sneakers or neoprene booties. Some people also wear fleece or wool socks for extra warmth. **Important:** Make sure your footwear can't get stuck in the boat; this could make it difficult to exit the boat if you take a swim.

Water Bottle: *VERY IMPORTANT!!* You need to keep hydrated. A hydrated paddler is a happy and energetic paddler. Bring some snacks too, such as trail mix, candy bars, fruit and energy bars. Some people prefer sports drinks such as Gatorade

Extra set of glasses or contacts: Good to have in case of breakage or loss of original set.

Eyeglass retainer strap ("Croakies"): Used to secure sunglasses or eyeglasses so they don't swim without you! It should firmly hold your glasses.

Skin protection: Everyone needs sunscreen and lip protection with sun block. If you're not wearing a helmet you'll want to protect your head and face from the sun's harmful rays with a hat or visor.

Sunglasses (optional)

Gloves (optional): Helpful for improving grip and to keep hands from getting blisters. Bicycle gloves work great!

Nose Plugs (optional): Useful if you're running a rapid or learning to roll.

"Take Out clothes": After the trip you'll want a towel and change of clothes in the car.

Keeping your stuff dry: Extra clothes may stay dry if you put them in a double Ziploc bag. They're also useful for storing lunch, snacks, etc. If something *must* be dry (keys with electronic chips, cell phones), you'll want a dry bag - specialized gear from EMS or Dicks. During training you can ask your staff to carry these items if you must bring them.

Medication: Be sure to bring any medication that you may require in case of emergency in a waterproof case or baggie. Let your instructor know what to do in case of emergency.

Large plastic trash bag: Great for storing wet clothing and gear at the end of the day.