

# The Extended Paddle Roll

*by Sean Morley*

The kayak roll is a fundamental skill for an advanced paddler and once you have acquired a solid combat roll, you will have the confidence to paddle with friends in the most challenging of conditions. First learn to roll with a professional instructor in a heated pool. Learn to roll in a whitewater or sea kayak, it doesn't matter - the skill is very transferable. Once you have your pool roll, it's time to take it to the cold water of a river or the ocean.

Rolling in cold water is as much a mental game as it is a physical challenge. The fear of failure and a resulting swim can be difficult to overcome. One strategy is to use the Extended Paddle Roll. By shifting your hands down the paddle shaft, away from the working blade, putting the working blade further away from the boat, you increase the amount of leverage you have which makes the roll considerably more reliable. It is also much kinder on your body, because you are less inclined to over-reach and over-extend your front shoulder. As I get older and stiffer, I find myself using the extended paddle roll more and more!

In this [video](#), Ken Whiting demonstrates the Pawlata Roll (named after Austrian kayaker [Edi Hans Pawlata](#)). This version of the Extended Paddle Roll works great and holding the blade with your back hand certainly gives you a very positive feel of the orientation of the paddle blades. Shifting your hands such that both hands remain on the paddle shaft but with your back hand at the joint of the paddle shaft and the blade is often enough to give you the extra leverage you need for a 'bomb-proof' roll.

There is a certain amount of stigma attached to using the Extended Paddle Roll, but I would much rather make sure that my roll is successful at my first attempt,

especially in rock gardens or in big surf. In my surf kayak, I use a very short paddle (180cm) so I have to use the extended paddle roll every time!

The Extended Paddle Roll is just another skill to add to your repertoire and you should not neglect practising your regular C to C or Sweep Roll.

Remember, a good '**Hip Snap**' is the key to any successful roll, so don't try to muscle yourself up by pulling down on the paddle shaft. The blade is just there for support as you hip snap, using your lower body to bring the kayak upright.

See you on the water!



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