LAUNCH CARD

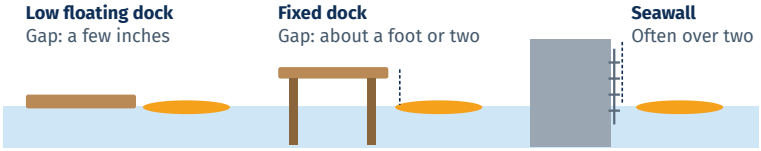
Launching a Kayak From a Dock or Seawall

Boarding is when most people get wet. Match your dock to the method below, stay low, and sit before you transfer.

Before you step in

- [ ] **Life vest on** before you go near the kayak.
- [ ] **Shoes with grip** and a strapped heel. Seawalls hide oyster shell.
- [ ] **Phone and keys in a dry bag or pouch**, not a pocket.
- [ ] **Paddle on the dock** within reach of the seat.
- [ ] **A helper on the bow** if you can get one.

Which method fits your dock



Your setup	Gap to the water (rough)	Method
Low floating dock	A few inches	Sit on the edge, feet in first, slide onto the seat
Fixed dock, mid height	About a foot or two	Same, with a helper on the bow
Fixed dock or wall, big drop	More than two feet	Ladder or step, or choose another spot
Seawall with ladder	Varies	Climb down, then transfer to the seat
Tall seawall, no ladder	Often well over two feet	**Usually unsuitable. Text us a photo first.**

Ranges are what we see on canal homes, not a code. Your own dock is the only measurement that counts.

Low floating dock

1. Slide the kayak in and hold it parallel to the dock.
2. Lay the paddle on the dock.
3. Sit on the edge facing the kayak, feet on the deck or in the footwell.
4. Hands flat on the dock beside your hips. Lower your seat onto the kayak.
5. Once balanced, pick up the paddle and push off.

Fixed dock with a drop

1. Lower the kayak with the bow rope in hand, or have a helper hold it parallel.
2. Sit on the edge, legs over the kayak, paddle on the dock.
3. Hands on the dock. Lower your feet onto the deck one at a time.
4. Slide your hips onto the seat in one controlled move. Stay low.

Three rules that prevent most swims

- **Sit first, then transfer.** Never stand on the kayak and try to sit.
- **Never one foot on the kayak and one on the dock.** Do not jump.
- **Tandem:** board one at a time, heavier paddler first, while the other holds the dock.

Call or text (605) 760-4448
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Seawall with a ladder

1. Lower the kayak first and tie the bow line to a cleat or railing.
2. Vest on. Climb down facing the wall with three points of contact.
3. Stop on the lowest dry rung and shift sideways onto the seat, one hand on the ladder.
4. Release the ladder and take the paddle.

Look for oyster growth on the ladder before you step. In saltwater the bottom rungs collect oysters, barnacles and algae. Shell cuts, and algae is slick.

Seawall without a ladder

A tall seawall with no ladder is usually not a good launch. Do not guess. Text us a photo of the wall from the water side with a rough height. Sometimes the answer is a nearby floating dock, a neighbor's low dock (with permission), or a boarding ladder that hangs over the wall.

Boat lifts

Do not board from the lift. Rails are narrow and slick, and cables snag paddles and ankles. Launch from the dock on the side away from the lift.

Use the tide

- Canal water usually swings a foot or two. That can turn an easy step into an awkward one on a fixed dock.
- **Launch near high tide** for the shortest drop.
- **Be back before low tide**, or plan to use the ladder.
- Predictions: NOAA Fort Myers station **8725520**. Freshwater canals have no tide.

Getting out onto the dock

1. Paddle up parallel to the dock and grab a cleat or post.
2. Tie the bow line and lay the paddle on the dock.
3. Hands on the dock, turn your hips toward it and lift your seat onto the edge.
4. Swing your legs out. On a taller dock, one knee on the edge first, then the other.
5. Stand only when both feet are on the boards and away from the edge.

If you fall in

A sit-on-top does not fill with water, and your vest keeps you floating. Keep hold of the kayak.

1. Float beside the middle with both hands across to the far edge.
2. Kick and pull until your chest is over the seat.
3. Swing a leg over, roll onto your back and sit up.

Upside down? Push down on the edge to roll it back. Next to a ladder, climb out.

Tie off with a cleat hitch

1. Bow line once around the base of the cleat.
2. Cross over the top and go under the far horn.
3. Cross back and go under the near horn. Do the figure eight twice.
4. Finish with a locking turn and tuck the tail.

No cleat? Use a piling with a couple of half hitches. Leave a little slack so the kayak can ride a wake.

Keep the kayak off the oysters

Do not leave a kayak rubbing against oysters on a seawall, piling or ladder. Shell can damage the hull. Tie it clear of the wall or pull it onto the dock or lawn.

Pedal kayaks

The Malibu PDL is roughly 105 pounds. Do not lift it to the water alone. Keep the pedal drive clear of pilings and the canal bottom.

Not sure your dock works?

Text a photo to **(605) 760-4448** before you book. At delivery we check dock height, the ladder and the cleats, and tell you on the spot if something looks tricky.

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This guide online: How to get in a kayak from a dock or seawall