

Kayak Storage- 2020 Summary



Now that you've got your kayak, where do you put it, assuming you might actually stop actively using it on rare occasions. This is a difficult subject because it all depends on your personal situation and what facilities or space you have. There are lots of options if you have a short recreational kayak. They can often be easily put in a garage or carried inside and placed on the coffee table, in a basement, or spare room. For a longer sea kayak or for someone living in an apartment, it is not so easy unless the boat is a folding or inflatable kayak. If you have a plastic boat, be careful if storing it in a very hot place or over an extended length of time. If it is supported at just two points and not at the interior bulk heads, the hull can become permanently deformed.

If you have a garage with space, the easiest and cheapest method is a rug or flattened cardboard box on the floor. If you have a plastic kayak, even this minimal padding is optional. To go a bit upscale and make the kayak more accessible, a couple of padded sawhorses work well. If you are a bit more limited for space, there are other options. I once had a two pulley system in my garage where I could hoist my boat to the ceiling and out of the way.



Other spaces saving options are wall mount systems. These are available as commercial kits or can be homemade. These can work not only in a garage or other room, but under a deck, or on an outside wall.



An option if you have a fair amount of space, either indoors or out is a freestanding rack, again either a commercial kit or homemade. These can either be kept in a garage, under a deck, in a shed, or out in the open. They can be designed for single or multiple kayaks. These racks can be permanently anchored or movable. If you are working with a hard, level surface, wheels are a nice addition. Carpet, rug remnants, or split foam pipe insulation is a good idea on the support bars.



If you do an on-line search for "kayak racks", you will find literally hundreds of examples of commercial and homemade racks, as well as plans to build your own. This is an excellent source for ideas that may work for you.

A final option, if there is no way you can store your kayak where you live, is either move or find a friend who has space and optimally lives on the water. More practically, check marinas, outfitters that run trips or rent boats, or local clubs and boathouses.

Now that you have hopefully found a method and place for storing your boat, what are some good storage practices?

I've already mentioned the issue with boats with rotomolded plastic hulls, particularly in hot conditions or over an extended period of time. The hull will tend to deform if not properly supported. Try and support any boat over as large an area as possible and as near as possible to any interior bulkheads where the hull is strongest. Some people transport and store plastic boats upside down. A little deformation of the deck will not affect how the boat handles in the water, as will a deformation on the bottom of the hull.

Store your boat dry and clean, inside and out, particularly for long term storage. Drain the water from the cockpit and any (supposedly) water tight storage compartments. If stored indoors, safe from any critters or varmints, it's a good practice to open any hatches or remove any covers. Removing these will prolong their life, as gaskets will not be compressed and neoprene or snap on covers will not be stretched out. Standing fresh water in a boat will encourage mold and mildew, especially in enclosed spaces. Salt is corrosive, even to stainless steel over time, and salt crystals are abrasive and will degrade straps, foam padding, and other fabrics.

Outdoor storage has additional issues. UV exposure from the sun over time will degrade most non-metallic materials, including the hull, straps, bungees, deck lines, seats, and hatch covers.

It will also fade pigments. It's a good idea to regularly apply a UV protectant, such as 303

Aerospace Protectant®, on your boat on a regular basis. Try to avoid storing your boat in direct

sunlight. Some people rely on a shaded area, others put a roof or tarp over their rack, and others purchase or fabricate a kayak cover. If using a cover that completely encloses the kayak, try and ensure that the boat is dry for long term storage.



A second issue with outdoor storage is critters and varmints. With this issue, you want to have a cockpit cover and keep any hatches sealed. Again, try to insure that the interior of the boat is dry if storing for over a week or so. Mice can find a kayak a perfect place to establish a home. If salt or the smell of food is present, rodents and other animals can chew a lot of things up. A raccoon can easily chew through a rubber hatch cover. And who wants to be a mile offshore only to discover that your local spider has taken up residence?



A final issue with outdoor storage is security. Several of our members have lost their boats due to theft.

Keeping your boat out of view from the street, if possible, is a good start. Behind your house, under a deck, in a fenced area are all possibilities. One of the best deterrents, for on your car, in your yard, or at a storage facility is a vinyl coated cable lock. These are widely available, both with and without included locks. Many sea



kayaks have stainless security loops on their decks for locking down a kayak. If not, marine supply stores have the necessary hardware to add one. In other cases you can pass the cable under or around a fixed seat. Some cable lock systems are specifically designed for kayaks and have two cables with a

large and a small loop. The large loops are placed around the bow and the stern of the kayak. The small loop on the long cable is then wrapped around a stationary object until there is no slack when the two small loops are locked together. Be sure that whatever locks you use are corrosion resistant and rinse with fresh water if they come into contact with salt water. I've often used a long cable lock if leaving a group of kayaks at a festival or other public place. If the other kayakers have security loops they can lock their boats to a single cable using individual padlocks. Just don't lose any people or let them lose a key!



Talk to other kayakers and ask questions. The CPA forum is also a good place to ask

<https://www.cpakayaker.com/forums/> . There are lots of options!

