Entry

- Hang before entering and wait until people in front go.
- Drop entire upper body on the blade to enter. Body weight should be supported by blade.
- Body weight not on blade on outside hip.
- Assist with top arm drive to enter as quickly as possible.
- Do not apply any power through the bottom arm, or length gained on setup wasted.
- Enter cleanly at a positive angle.
- You should not see any white water or hear any sound when the blade enters.

Catch

- Entire blade should be buried before power applied.
- Initiate strong pull through core, hip and primarily back muscles.
- Bottom arm and shoulder stable, but relaxed.
- Drive down with top arm to counteract blade’s tendency to rise out of water.

Pull

- Explode out of the catch, pulling primarily with lower back.
- Derotate through shoulders, hips following.
- Use entire body for leverage. Body should swing or “hinge” from the hip.
- Keep weight on outside hip.
- Inside hip rotates forward to follow core and shoulder rotation.

Pull

- Keep core tight and stable. Back should stay flat throughout pull.
- Do not break straight bottom arm or bent top arm.
- Outside leg and hip stay planted. Minimize loss of power through weak connections!
- Power should be at maximum as blade angle becomes neutral.
- Do not begin to lift blade out of the water as blade goes neutral.
Still Pulling

• Maintain hard pressure as blade passes knee.
• Back should swing up to near upright.
• Finish off rotation and use upper back muscles to assist pull.
• Keep bottom arm straight.
• Do not allow blade to go too low in water. Fist should be in the water, but not deeply submerged. Linear stroke through the water, not an arc!
• Do not prepare to exit until blade past knee.

Finish

• Pull to the hip! Exit should occur between upper thigh and hip. Do not pull past you, but do not exit early.
• Do not lift blade out of water in preparation for exit.
• Do not feather the blade or move it sideways.
• Do begin to move the upper body forwards as you continue to pull back.
• Just before exiting, apply extra power and top arm drive. Make sure you feel resistance, otherwise you’re sinking the blade uselessly.
• Immediately release all pressure on the blade, and it should begin to bounce out of the water due to the pressure just before the exit.

Exit

• Fully relax entire upper body.
• Snap the blade upwards with thumb of top hand.
• Recover vertically out of the water.
• Lower arm should be relaxed. It should not lift the blade.
• Relax the body forward, don’t throw it forward.

Setup

• Extend the bottom arm as far forward as possible.
• Keep inside shoulder low and relaxed. This allows for a greater range of motion, and avoids injury!
• Keep the space open between the two upper arms.
• Pull your body forward into this open space as far as you can. Keep looking forward.
• Reach forward more and prepare for the pull by rotating forward with the shoulders. The inside hip swings back to follow this rotation, the outside hip does not move at all!
Things to think about:

The “Power A”
- This is pretty much universal to any stroke style we might use.
- The upper body relaxed, but locked into a stable “A” shape. The shoulders stay grounded as do the elbows.
- The bottom and top elbows stay absolutely fixed with respect to the triangle formed by the hands and shoulders, and the triangle pivots about the shoulder.
- Prevents loss of power through weak connections between water, body, boat. Also prevents shoulder injury.

Staying “Open”
- If shoulders and arms not relaxed, the open space between the arms disappears.
- Should be able to “dive into” the space between your arms, and in fact, you should on each setup.
- Neutral shoulder position (flat, level and locked down) and relaxed arms with proper angles at the elbows.
- Allows for the less tiring recovery, smoother stroke, and surprisingly longer reach.

Many people on the team have problems with driving their top elbow down, lifting and not relaxing their inside shoulder, letting the angle between their arms collapse, or all three. This can also lead to injury, and makes otherwise proper technique much harder to achieve.

Weight balance and airwork
- A boat which rocks from side to side, or which recovers too violently slows itself down.
- The key to keeping the boat stable and bodies coordinated is to keep body weight outside the boat.
- Body weight should be planted through your outside hip.
- This will keep your weight planted on your paddle.
- As you pull back, you keep your weight on the outside, even as your hips rotate. Since your weight will be outside of the boat, it will not rock, and you can keep pressure on the blade more easily. Also try to “hinge” at the same speed as everyone around you so that you don't work against each other.
- Rotating with the weight on the outside hip requires rotating the inside hip back, not the outside one forward. (in a DB only)

Four rules for airwork:
1. Keep your weight outside the boat. You can achieve this by keeping your top hand outside of the boat at all times. This will be easier to do if you follow rule 2.
2. Use minimal effort to move the blade through the air. Recovery should be fast though. Lift the blade up and forward out of the water using the top arm thumb only. Ease the body into position. Don't throw around your weight, it makes the boat move backwards.
3. Do as much work as possible in the water. Begin to move the body forward while still pulling back. When working at high intensity, add extra pressure in the water in the back to bounce off of.
4. Hang at the front!
Connecting to the boat

- Legs are very important in paddling. Not to push throughout the stroke, but to initiate the boat’s acceleration off the catch, to brace against during the pull, and to help rotation.
- Both feet forwards seating position improves this connection without having to change anything major, and it makes a lot of bad habits below the waist impossible.
- Keep the weight planted on the outside, to keep the outer leg braced strongly and not moving about. (The quads should push a bit on each stroke to initiate the stroke, but the leg itself should not move!)
- You’re not moving the water with the blade, you’re not moving yourself against the water. You’re moving the boat through the water, and you’re not going to do this if you let force get lost on the way through you from the water to the boat.

Connecting to the water

- For Cal, during races is that most of the boat totally loses their connection to the water pretty much after the first foot in the front.
- You should feel hard pressure on the blade throughout the entire stroke. Not just the front.
- Your lower arm should be absolutely stable and pulling the water straight back.
- Practice applying power throughout your stroke until you can, as many people say, “feel the water.”
- This is where small boat time will really come in useful if you can get it, since it can’t be taught very well any other way.