

	Paddling in winter conditions Winter Safety – for those new to paddling
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Stand up Paddleboard – Inflatable’s – Sit on Tops – Kayak - Canoe

In the winter you might be waiting for that sunny day to come along so you can get out paddling. But if all you do is look out of your window, see what the weather is doing and then make a decision on whether to go paddling - **Think again** – winter conditions can be very different to the summer.

Many people paddle all year round by choosing the right conditions, the right place to go paddling and wearing the right clothing.

If you are heading for a river, maybe one you have paddled before and had a great time during the summer, it’s not just today’s weather you need to consider but the weather of the past week and more.

In the winter rainfall can raise the water levels quickly. Once the rain has finished and the sun has come out, rivers will continue to rise as water from the upper reaches fills the main watercourses. The calm gentle river of the summer can be transformed into fast flowing torrents suitable only for expert and experienced paddlers. The hazards caused by this include:

- Fast flowing water too strong to paddle against
- Strong currents around pontoons, moored boats, buoys and overhanging trees which you could be swept onto causing capsize or entrapment
- High river levels may mean that the safe areas to get out on the bank are difficult to access
- Weirs and rapids that were relatively low risk in low water and easy to avoid, are transformed with dangerous currents above them that make them difficult to avoid.

Checking water levels is easy, The Government publish National up to date, hour by hour reports on river levels. You should always check the river level before you go out.

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>

River levels by County can be found [here](#)

If a river is too high, you can always look for a different option such as a canal, lake or sheltered coastal bay.

To enjoy paddling through the winter British Canoeing’s Go Paddling web site gives you all the information you need on the places you can paddle, what to wear and what to check when paddling in winter <https://gopaddling.info/>