

The Forward Stroke

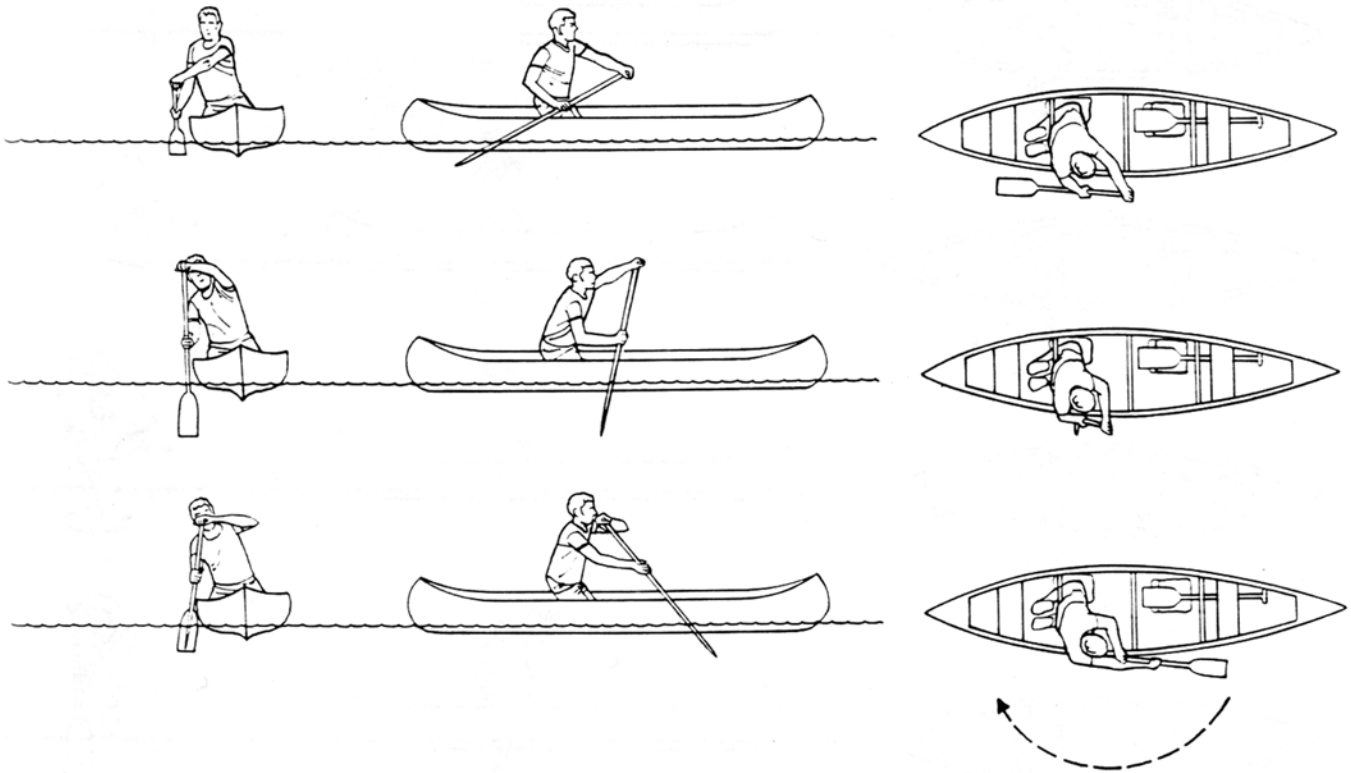
Purpose. To move the canoe forward.

Description. The paddle enters the water comfortably ahead of the paddler's position. The body—especially the shoulders—is rotated, with the lower arm extended and its shoulder leading. The top arm is cocked and near the head.

With the blade perpendicular to the keel line and the paddle vertical (grip over the water), pull straight along the side of the canoe parallel to the keel line. Power is applied with the top arm punching forward and down, over the blade, as the lower arm pulls. The body follows through by rotating to let the top arm and its shoulder lead. Body and shoulder rotation provides much of the power.

The stroke ends as the top arm is fully extended with the lower hand near the hip. Recovery begins when the blade is just behind the hip, with the paddler slicing the blade out of the water in an arc toward the bow. The paddler then feathers the blade to the start of a new stroke.

Synopsis. The tendency of the bow will be to turn away from the paddling side, especially if the paddle is not vertical or close to the side of the canoe during the stroke. Repeated strokes will result in increased speed (to a point) and increased turning. A large circle should result (Fig. 3-10).



The Backstroke

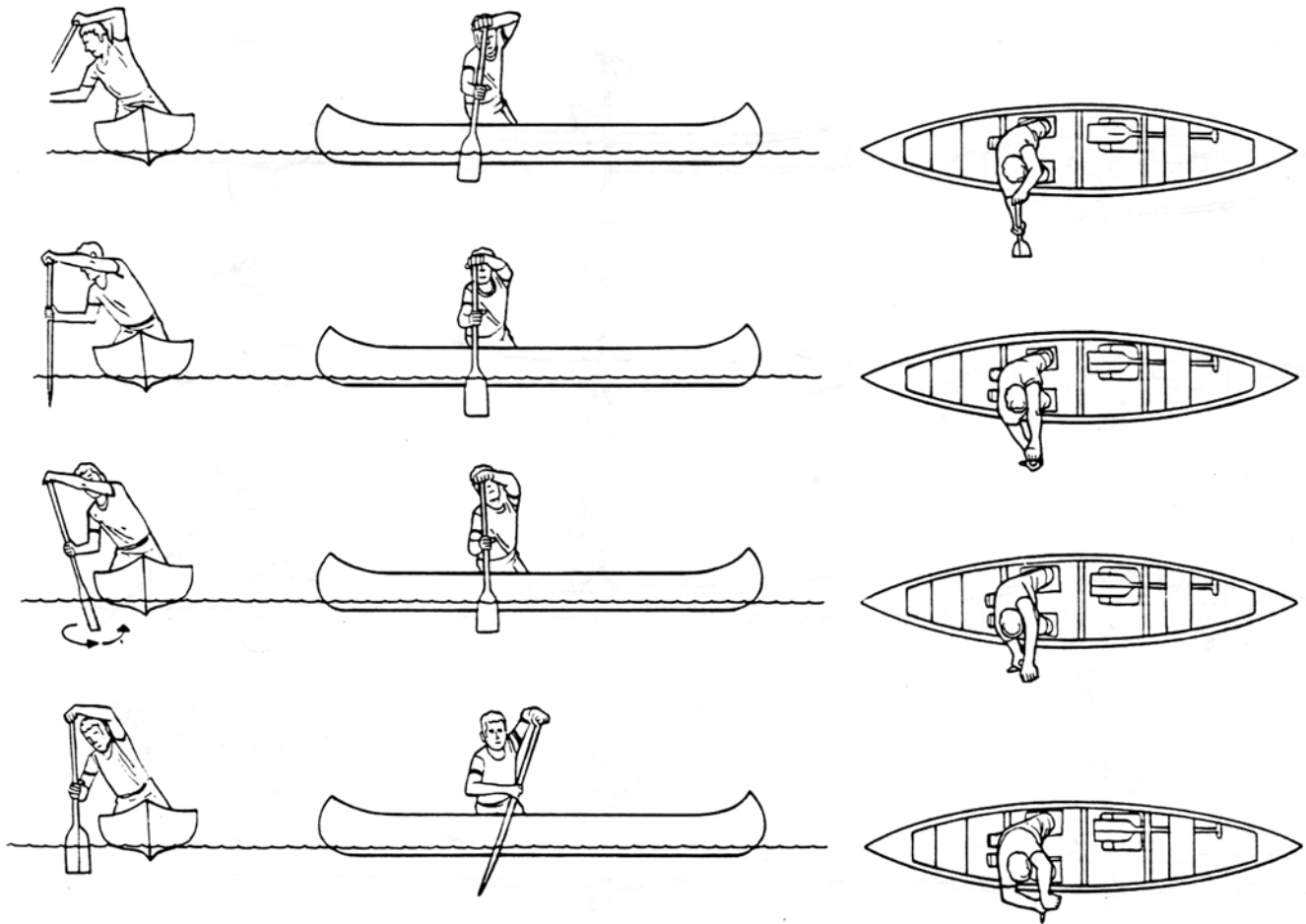
Purpose. To stop the forward motion of the canoe or to move it backward.

Description. The blade enters the water just behind the paddler and is flat to the surface. The paddler's body is rotated toward the paddling side, with the grip hand out over the water, arm extended. The bottom hand is next to the hip.

The paddle moves forward along the side of the canoe, parallel to the keel line, and power is applied to the stroke. The lower arm pushes down and forward as the top arm and its shoulder pull up and back, keeping the grip over the water. Shoulder rotation is most useful at the beginning of the stroke, and the arms follow through toward the end.

The stroke ends comfortably in front of the paddler, with the lower arm extended forward and the top arm bent, with the grip near the head. The paddler slices the blade out of the water and feathers to the beginning of a new stroke.

Synopsis. The canoe will move backward, with the bow tending to turn toward the paddle side, especially if the grip is not kept out over the water during the stroke. Repeated strokes will result in more speed (to a point) and more turning. A large circle should result (Fig. 3-11).



The Drawstroke

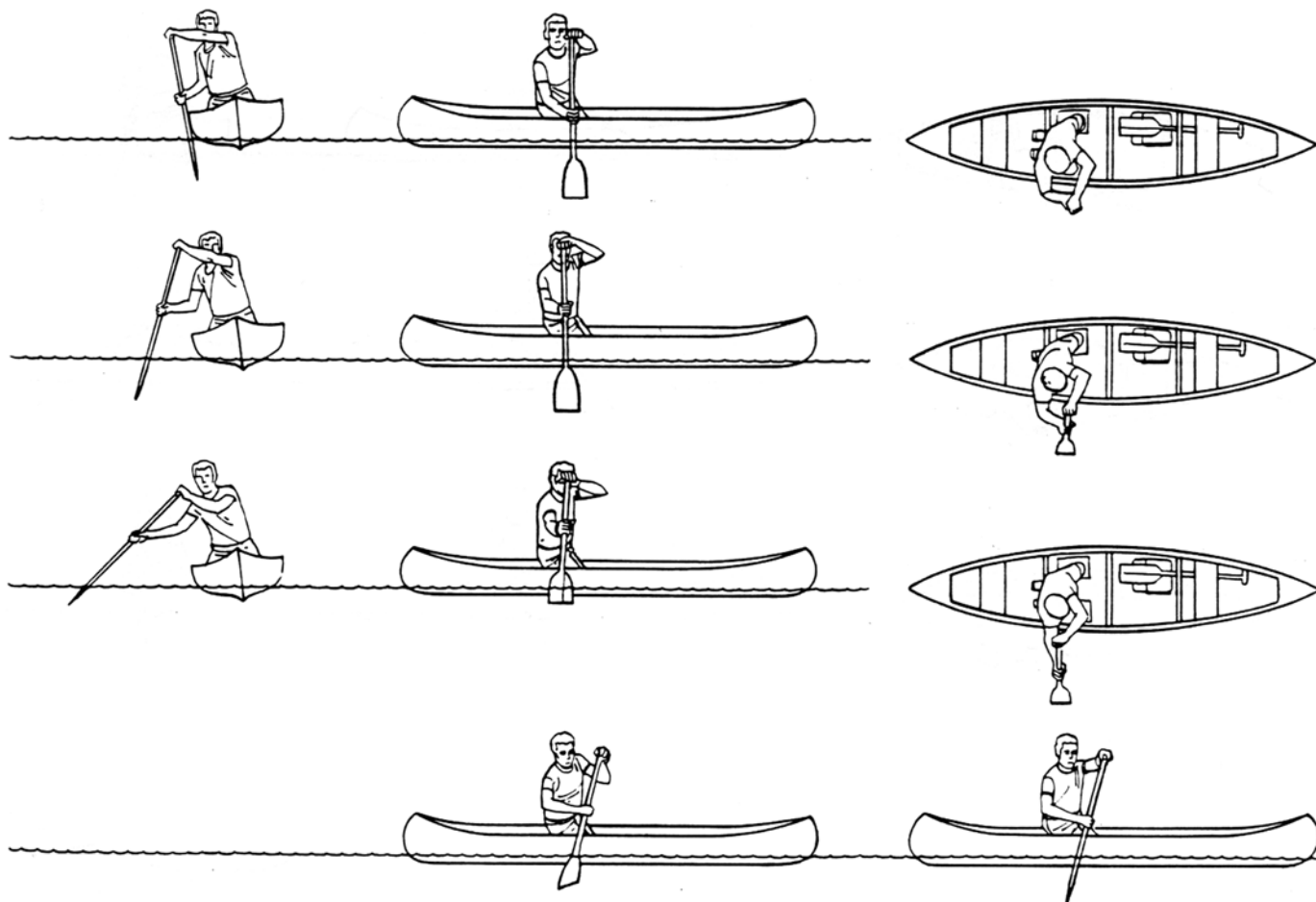
Purpose. To move the canoe sideways toward the paddle.

Description. The paddle enters the water directly to the side of the paddler, blade parallel to the keel line. The paddler's body is rotated toward the paddle side, with the lower arm nearly extended and the top arm cocked over the head.

The paddle pulls with the power face toward the canoe, perpendicular to the keel line, with the blade kept parallel to the keel line as power is applied. The top arm punches out over the water as the lower arm pulls toward the canoe. The shoulders rotate until parallel with the keel line. The paddle should remain nearly vertical throughout the stroke.

Recovery begins when the paddle is about 6 inches from the side of the canoe as the top arm is extended out over the water and the bent lower arm is near the side. The paddler may either slice the blade out of the water toward the stern by lowering the grip hand, or may slice the blade through the water directly to the start of a new draw by rotating the paddle 90 degrees (power face aft—near or toward the stern) and feathering through the water. The paddler should not let the paddle hit the side of the canoe before recovery begins.

Synopsis. The canoe should move directly sideways toward the paddling side, with no turning. During the stroke the boat may have a tendency to lean away from the paddling side (Fig. 3-12).



The Pushaway Stroke

Purpose. To move the canoe sideways away from the paddle.

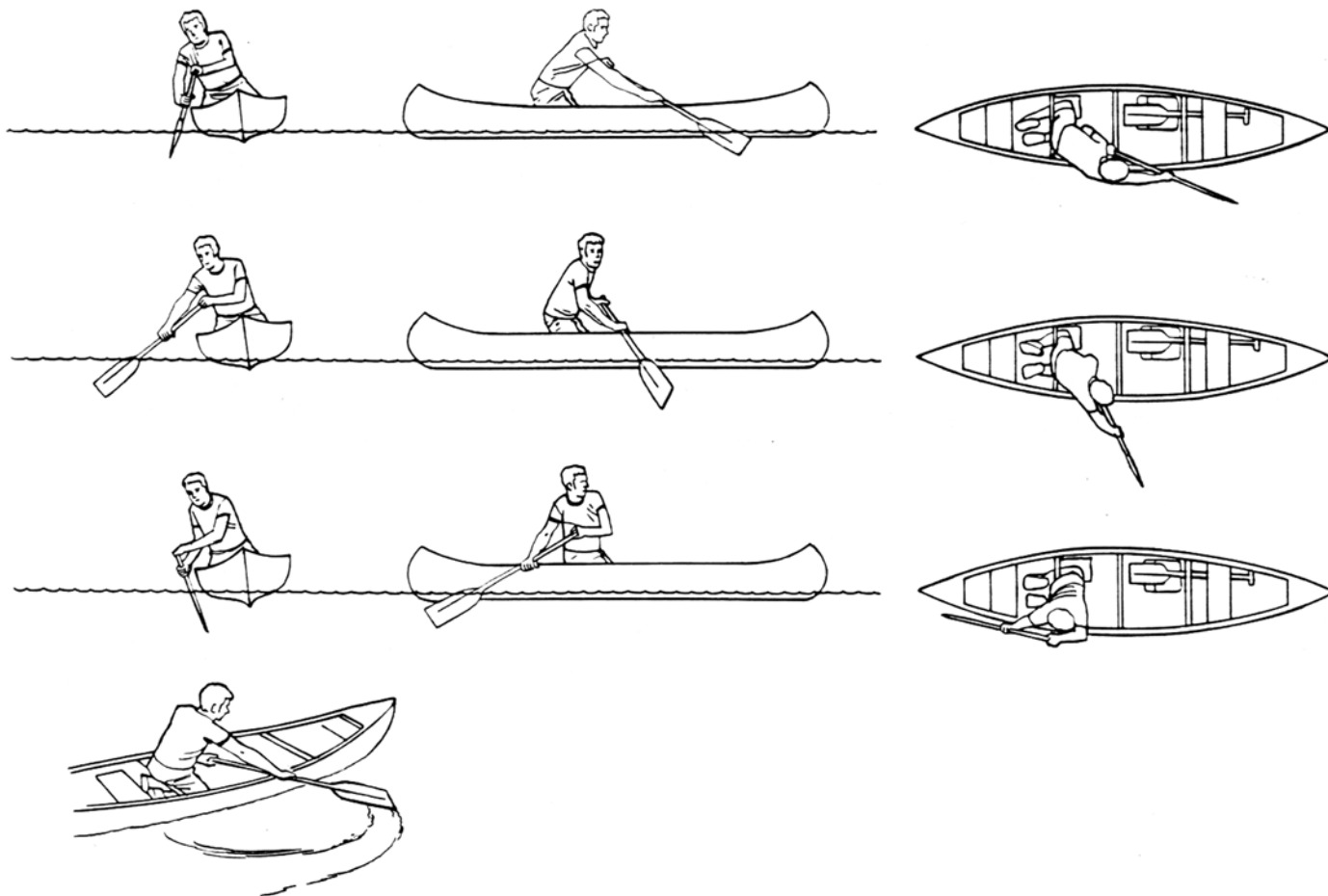
Description. The paddle enters the water directly alongside the paddler, with the blade just under the bilge (the area where the bottom of the boat meets the side of the boat) and parallel to the keel line. The shoulders are rotated toward the paddle side, with the top arm extended out over the water and the lower arm bent and braced against the paddler's side.

The paddle pushes with the back face away from the canoe perpendicular to the keel line, with the blade parallel to it as power is applied. The top arm and shoulder pull in toward the center of the canoe while the lower arm acts as a fulcrum initially and pushes out over the water near the end of the stroke.

The paddle should be nearly vertical throughout the stroke.

Recovery begins as the lower arm is extended out over the water a comfortable distance from the side of the canoe. The paddler can make the recovery either by lifting the blade from the water and swinging it toward the stern to begin another pushaway or by rotating the paddle 90 degrees (power face aft) and slicing it directly to the beginning of a new pushaway through the water.

Synopsis. The canoe should move directly sideways away from the paddling side with no turning. The canoe may tend to tilt or lean toward the paddling side during this stroke (Fig. 3-13).



The Forward Sweep

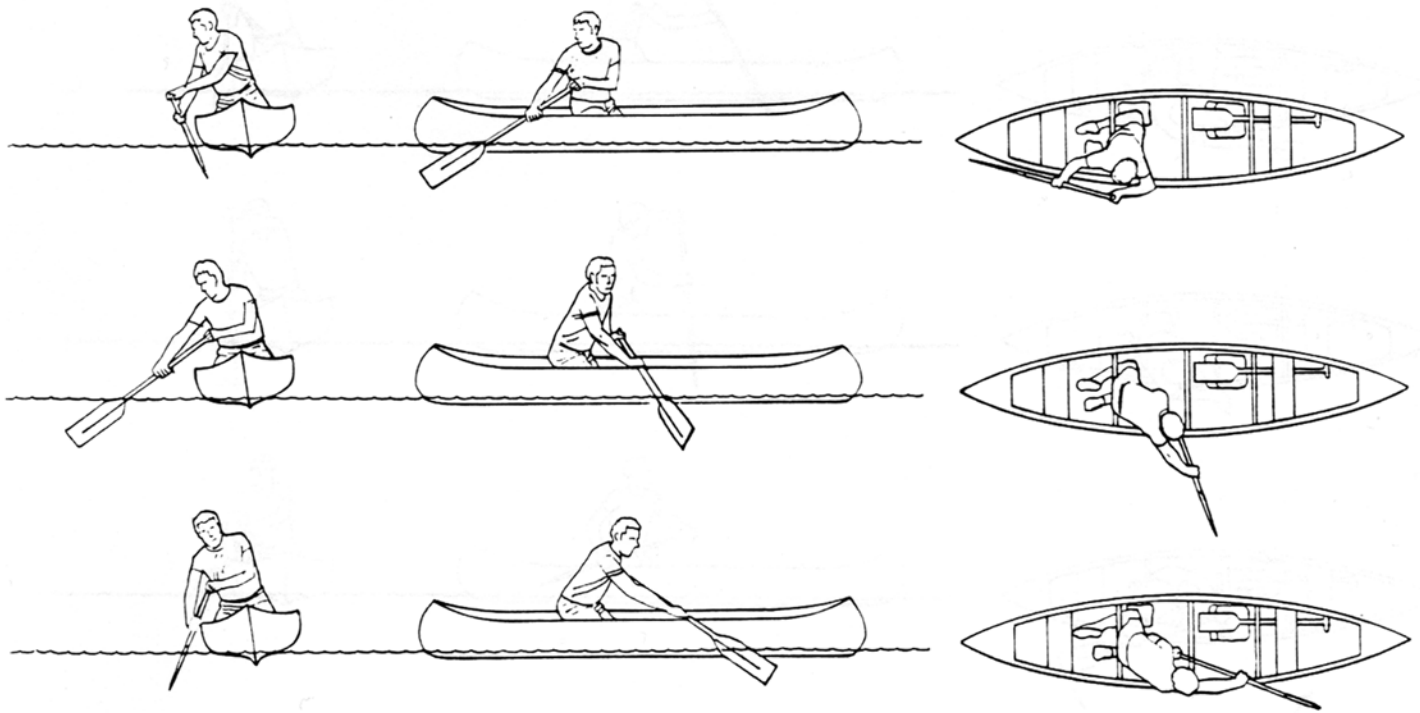
Purpose. To move the canoe forward and turn the bow away from the paddling side.

Description. The blade enters the water well forward of the paddler, alongside the canoe, with the blade vertical and the paddle nearly horizontal. The paddler leans forward, the lower arm extended and its shoulder rotated forward. The grip hand is low and in front of the body.

With the power face, the blade is pulled out from the bow and around toward the stern in a large arc of nearly 180 degrees. Power is applied by the lower arm and its shoulder pulling the paddle through its arc as the grip arm pushes forward and out over the water from in front of the body. The shoulders should rotate at least 90 degrees during this stroke.

The stroke ends nearly under the stern of the canoe, with the grip hand extended out over the water and the paddler's upper torso facing the paddling side. The lower arm is extended toward the stern, well behind the paddler. The paddler makes the recovery by lifting the blade out of the water and swinging it feathered in an arc to the start of another stroke.

Synopsis. The canoe should turn sharply, bow away from the paddling side, with very little headway (forward movement). Repeated strokes will result in a very tight circle, with the canoe moving forward and the bow turning away from the paddling side (Fig. 3–15).



The Reverse Sweep

Purpose. To turn the bow sharply toward the paddling side and reduce headway or move backward.

Description. The blade enters the water well behind the paddler, with the blade vertical, paddle nearly horizontal and extended well astern. The paddler's body is rotated toward the paddling side, leaning aft, with the lower arm nearly extended toward the stern and the grip hand alongside the hips and out over the water.

The back face pushes against the water as the paddle is moved through a broad arc of nearly 180 degrees toward the bow. Power is applied with the lower arm pushing the blade, first out and then toward the bow as the shoulders rotate at 90 degrees. The grip

hand pulls in toward the abdomen and stays just above the gunwale level throughout.

Recovery begins with the paddle near the bow as the body is leaning slightly forward, with the lower arm extended and its shoulder leading toward the bow. The paddler completes the recovery by lifting the blade out of the water and swinging it in an arc to the beginning of another stroke, with the blade feathered.

Synopsis. The canoe should turn sharply, bow toward the paddling side, with a slight amount of sternway (backward movement). Repeated strokes will result in a very tight circle, bow toward the paddle, with slight sternway (Fig. 3-16).