Learning to teach the roll.

I'd start by deciding what this roller needs today, then choose the exercise that lets you see it. Give them one useful thing to try and watch what changes. Ask your supervising coach to check your demonstration and assistance before you teach them.



Before you start

Agree your teaching scope and intervention plan with the qualified supervising coach. This guide does not qualify you to lead independently.

Ask the roller about experience and comfort, then check fit, exit readiness, rescue cover and suitable working space under the venue plan.

Demonstrate the chosen exercise and brief the helper. Have both explain or show their part back to you before starting.

Work with a qualified supervising coach and the pool session plan. Agree contact and a stop/help signal. Stop for pain or distress. No solo underwater practice, breath-hold tasks or surprise capsizes.

0 to 8 min / Agree how you will work together.

1. Agree with your supervising coach what you will teach and when they will step in.

2. Check the roller can use the agreed exit/help procedure before working upside down. Arrange any needed preparation under the session plan.

3. Ask the helper to show the assistance and the roller to explain the stop signal. Resolve uncertainty while everyone is upright.

8 to 15 min / Find the movement before adding the paddle.

1. Choose one short mat exercise that helps this learner understand the movement. Check your interpretation of the original recording with your mentor.

2. Explain that this is preparation; the land exercise is not the full water roll. Do not ask for an unaided upright roll in a kayak on land.

3. Check fit and easy exit in the actual boat. Keep the exercise comfortable and change it if the learner cannot use the demonstrated position.

Mat demonstration and boat-fit recording

Build the boat movement.

15 to 27 min / Turn the boat with support.

1. Demonstrate a small supported rotation, showing the difference between turning the boat and pushing the body upright. EJ uses a low, back-leaning finish; check whether that finish suits this learner.

2. Watch one feature at a time: boat rotation, early head lift or reliance on support. Ask what the roller felt before choosing the next cue.

3. If you see strain or uncertainty, reduce the movement and ask your supervising coach to reassess support and position. Do not chase a faster movement because the video describes a snap.

Cue: Let the boat come round before you lift your head.

Move on when: The roller can repeat a comfortable supported rotation with less pushing, and the coach agrees to add the paddle.

Otherwise: Keep the same support and reduce the lean. The paddle can wait for another session.

EJ phase 1 / 0:43 to 2:49

27 to 39 min / Add the paddle without changing the job.

1. Show how the paddle support is added while the boat rotation stays familiar. Use the video to check the shaft position and the hand that can pin it against the boat.

2. Have your mentor check blade angle, hand position and shoulder comfort for the learner. Avoid fixed left/right instructions unless you have established the side.

3. If supported practice is comfortable, the coach may approve a prepared attempt on water. Watch timing and blade loading; a failed attempt can have several causes, so observe before diagnosing.

Cue: Keep the boat movement you just found.

Move on when: The supported movement stays comfortable with the paddle; the qualified coach decides whether support can be reduced.

Otherwise: Restore support and return to the previous movement. A first roll is optional today.

EJ phase 2 and prepared first attempt / 2:49 to 5:17

The clock does not decide readiness. Repeat the useful exercise and leave later phases for another session when needed.

Find the setup and review.

39 to 50 min / Learn where the paddle starts.

1. Demonstrate setup and transition upright, from a viewpoint the roller can follow. Check the blade orientation with your mentor, particularly if you change sides.

2. Let the roller show the movement back to you. Eyes-closed rehearsal is optional while upright and comfortable, not a breath-hold task.

3. Keep the underwater task short and agreed. Judge readiness from the movement and confidence you have observed, not the elapsed session time.

Cue: Find your paddle position, then turn the boat.

Move on when: The roller can find the setup and transition upright, and the coach approves any water progression.

Otherwise: Continue upright setup practice or return to supported rotation. Do not add submersion just to finish the plan.

EJ phase 3 / 5:17 to 7:52

50 to 55 min / Find the setup from somewhere else.

1. If earlier work is not settled, use these minutes to repeat the part that helped. Phase 4 is not compulsory.

2. For an upright extension, vary one starting condition and ask the roller to find the known setup. Agree any water version with your mentor first.

3. Explain that practising in a pool does not establish readiness to roll on a river. Do not use surprise capsizes to make the exercise more realistic.

Cue: Find the starting position you already know.

Move on when: The roller can recover the familiar setup comfortably and describe what they are doing.

Otherwise: Finish with a comfortable earlier exercise and leave varied entries for another session.

EJ phase 4 / 7:52 to 9:23

55 to 60 min / Talk through what changed.

1. Ask the roller what they noticed before giving your assessment. Use the helper's observation to compare with yours.

2. With your mentor, explain why you progressed, repeated or stepped back. Identify one change to your demonstration, cue or helper briefing.

3. Record what the learner actually practised, their next task and any review needed. Completing this plan is not a teaching assessment.

Source and next practice

Adapted from Eric Jackson, EJ's Rolling and Bracing 4 Phases of the Roll. Our timings and role briefings are additions. Illustrations are AI-assisted session scenes, not exact technique or rescue diagrams. Qualified coach review remains outstanding.

Watch the source video | Open your full guide

Next practice: _____