



MUSKOKA • ALGONQUIN PARK • HALIBURTON

How do I... best carry my paddles while I portage?

I often see people carrying things in their hands while the portage from lake to lake. The secret to a successful portage is to make the crossing in one go. If you have to come back for anything even if it's just a paddle this means that you then have to cross the portage three times, (there, back and there again). There is no such thing as a double portage, it's either a single or a triple.

Many people just carry their paddles in their hands, this is ok if that's all you have to carry and it's only a very short portage.

I've also seen people rig up elaborate ways to lash their paddles inside the canoe for their portage crossing. This presents a few problems. Mainly it makes the person who is portaging the canoe (already a daunting task) have to carry more weight, even just a couple of paddles can make this job harder. It also presents all kind of balancing problems. Canoes are precisely balanced and if you add anything it throw off this balance. You never ever want a canoe that is front heavy.

Ok here's the secret to portaging with paddles.

Each and every well designed canoe pack will have two little pockets, one on each side near the bottom. If you look at the shape of these pockets they are often half circle shaped with large top openings. Above these pockets are often 2 or 3 cinch straps used to reduce the volume of your canoe pack if it's not completely full. If you slide a paddle under these cinch straps while they are loose you will find that the blade of your paddle sits perfectly in the half circle pocket at the bottom. Now just tighten the cinch straps and repeat on the other side and you have a perfect hands free way to portage your paddles. Note watch out for low overhanging branches.