



of these stretches our guides briefed us on the hazards and the safest routes to take while still maximizing speed. It seemed to be over all too soon and we were paddling through the Canterbury Plains. Luke and I compared notes; yes we were both sore, no we didn't want to stop and catch a lift for the last bit. The group dispersed through the multiple paths of the Waimakariri River hoping for the quickest route, some more successful than others, all to end up at the Gorge Bridge and our pick up. Rob cheerfully explained that the competitors, on race day, would now need to run up the nearby hill to collect their bikes and ride into Christchurch. We laughed while I am sure I heard some expletives from other members of the rather tired group. Sixty seven kilometres and our bodies knew it. Onwards to the airport drop off and we were heading back to the kids (who had been asked to prepare the hot water bottles).

I don't feel words can do justice to this amazing experience so you will need to go and do it for yourselves. There is a cost but safety is never too expensive. The guides have amazing experience and it is well worth tipping out just to see them in action (I left that to the others though). Get your Grade Two white water certificate and be ready for next year's river run.



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Roof Racks

– Dispelling the myths and answering frequently asked questions...

By Steve Smith



As you'd expect, Roof Rack Centre staff are very experienced in carrying kayaks, bikes and roof boxes on cars. Because loads and cars vary enormously, your particular, almost unique requirements will benefit from their expert advice. They are more than happy to provide this.

When you wish to purchase you'll find that the 'Roof Rack Centre', a dedicated part of your Canoe & Kayak Centre, stocks everything you could possibly need for recreational or commercial use on **your** vehicle. Our brands include Thule, Prorack and Rhino-Rack.

In New Zealand in particular, there are a large number of imported vehicles which will often require a different roof rack solution from the one that you may find in a fit guide. We can advise further on these.

Here are questions commonly asked by kayakers:

What type of roof rack will suit my car?

While roof racks work on about 98% of vehicles, you'll require specific parts to fit them to your vehicle.

If your vehicle has rain gutters any rain-gutter mounted roof rack will almost certainly work, but you may need to change bar width and foot height. More than likely, you can take the rack off one vehicle and put it on another with a rain gutter.

However, since most modern cars do not have gutters, most roof racks are designed for cars without them. These incorporate removable and permanent mount designs, and some have rails, fix-points or take a clamp mount system.

Your gutterless vehicle's roof rack consists of the bar, 'feet' and the 'fit kit' which attaches around the upper edge of the door jamb to hold the roof rack onto your vehicle. The feet used fit many different types of vehicles, whereas each kit is made to fit a specific vehicle.

What is the difference between a roof 'rail' and roof 'bars / racks'?

Roof rails run front to rear on both sides of the roof. They are often factory-fitted.

On their own, they cannot be used as roof racks. Roof bars run across the roof side to side and are clamp mounted (secured with fit kits to the door frames), mounted to factory-fitted fix points or roof-rail mounted.

I would like to fit roof rails to my vehicle. Do you supply these?

No, roof rails require internal roof mounts and are mostly fitted during vehicle manufacture. Whilst possible, the cost would probably not be worthwhile and we have a specific solution for your vehicle anyway. You **won't** need to buy a set of longitudinal roof rails to find a roof rack to suit your car.

What is the difference between a roof rail & integrated roof rail?

Integrated Roof Rails are usually a moulded profile, raised slightly, running front to rear down both sides of the roof. There is **NO GAP** between the rail and the roof. Commonly these are found on the Subaru Legacy / Outback models.

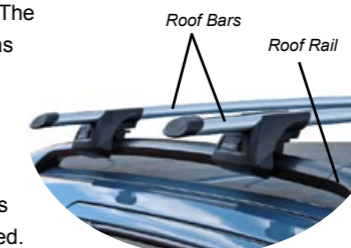


What is a roof mounted fix-point?

A fix-point is a recessed, roof mounted, fixture point on a vehicle. It is normally a threaded hole or metal profile, concealed by lift up covers, slide back covers or plastic plugs.

What is a clamp mount system?

Because some vehicles don't have a fix point or rails, a specific fit kit or bracket is available to clamp the roof bars from the inside of the door frame. Contrary to some people's views these systems are very secure and need only an occasional check for tightness. Note that as you tighten some steel clamps on roof bars you'll see the steel bars curve slightly – this is entirely normal.



Can I use bars longer than those listed for my vehicle?

In some cases this is possible but call us for advice. It can be helpful to opt for a longer bar if you want to add other items (see below) such as a roof box or bike rack or to carry more than one kayak.

Can I transport a roof box AND bikes on my roof bars?

Yes, subject to remaining within the permitted roof carrying weight capacity for your particular vehicle and the width of roof rack fitted. This is where the through mount system gives more load carrying capacity

Why doesn't one roof rack fit all cars?

Since cars with rain gutters are being phased out, roof rack manufacturers are no longer making one rack to fit all vehicles. However, with different fitting kits some roof rack systems can be satisfactorily adjusted.

Do I need tools to install my rack?

Most roof racks don't require special tools to fit them to your vehicle, but if tools are required, they are included with the kit. At the Roof Rack Centre we provide a free fitting service. (This doesn't apply to permanent mount systems.)

If you are mounting a factory style track or permanent mount system no drilling is required. When it is necessary don't be scared. We are trained to do it for you, using the same methods and materials that the vehicle's manufacturer employs on the production assembly line.

How can I stop my roof racks from being stolen?

Most racks come with a standard security locking device. If not supplied as standard, one can be purchased as an accessory.

How much weight can I carry on my roof racks?

This depends on the strength of your roof, so consult your 'owner's manual' for specific carrying capacity. This can also be determined by the style and brand of roof rack.

Are roof racks noisy?

Generally no, but when the aerodynamics of the vehicle are altered the roof racks can generate a small whistle. This minor irritation can often be solved by moving the front bar slightly forward or back.

Can I remove my racks when I'm not using them?

Unless you have a permanent mount system in which the roof rack is riveted to a track or to your roof, most roof rack systems can be simply removed. But most owners leave them on. If you decide to remove them, refer to your installation instructions and take steps in the reverse order.

What is the best way to transport my kayak?



While various types of roof racks, including inflatable and foam racks are available, the most secure long term option will always be a solid

after-market roof rack fitted to the roof of your vehicle. Accessories such as kayak or canoe cradles and vertical bars (Fold-a-Poles) to which the kayak can be tied are helpful and available.

Otherwise, if you have a set of roof racks on your vehicle without any other fancy gadgets, put your kayak upside down on the roof racks to prevent distortion of the hull. Move it around to find a natural position for the kayak to rest on the roof racks. If needed, adjust the distance between the roof racks.

However, the best way to transport most kayakers is on their side. Use a set of Fold-a-poles (vertical posts) secured to your roof rack bars. Composite / fibreglass kayakers should be transported on kayak cradles.

It's a good idea to put foam padding between the racks and boat. When everything is in position, use tie downs to secure the kayak to the roof racks. If you're loading a long boat, it is advisable to tie the bow and stern of the boat to your vehicle's bumpers too.

How do I tie down my load?

If you opt to use rope remember that some rope will stretch, especially when wet which means that a secured kayak may work loose. **Bungy is never substantial enough**, so we advise against using this. We supply specific tie downs, designed for the job, for around \$50 a pair.

With all boats we recommend tying down the bow and stern to towing eyes on the vehicle. Also – use a tow flag (and light at night) attached to the rear of the load (and save yourself a \$350 fine!). At the Roof Rack Centre we have bow and stern straps which are cost-effective and easy to use.

Remember, if you have any questions about the right system to suit your vehicle, call your local Canoe & Kayak / Roof Rack Centre where we offer fitting, **free** advice and most of all a professional and friendly service.

For more on this subject visit www.roofrackcentre.co.nz/hints



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