

GETTING UP, BASIC STROKES AND TECHNIQUES FOR BEGINNERS

Select a Stable Paddle Board

Select a wide 30"+ and stable 11'+ board to start. Always start in calm, flat water.

The board should feel comfortable and not unstable when standing up. If it still feels too unstable after several attempts to gain your balance, try a larger, wider paddle board.

Many people start out on a board much too small, and can never seem to gain balance and become disheartened. Don't let this be you. Choose the right size board to start out and when in doubt, always go wider and thicker.

Follow these helpful tips for holding the paddle

Always grip the paddle with one hand on the top of the paddle and the other on the center of the shaft. Hold the paddle in front of you, with your elbows bent at 90 degrees. This should give you comfortable amount of space for paddling.

The blade will be angled, and when paddling remember to keep the blade angle facing away from you.

Paddles float, so if you fall and must let it go – it won't sink.

How to Stand Up on your Paddle Board

Always start out in calm, flat water and keep in mind you could be falling! So unless you're in the tropics, a wetsuit may be a good idea.

- Get the board out into in water so the fin is free from hitting the bottom
- Start out on your knees and take a few strokes on each side of the board
- Slowly, stand up with one foot at a time and stay in the middle of the board with your feet parallel to the stringer – about shoulder width apart
- Keep a slight bend in the knees and your core centered over the board

Basic Strokes: Forward Stoke

There are a few basic philosophies on paddle technique, but all revolve around using your paddle as a lever. Your top hand will be driving the lever and the bottom hand will act as the fulcrum point. So with that in mind, we provide the following strokes and tips:

- Keep your bottom arm straight and relatively still
- Pull your top arm toward your body to extend the paddle forward
- Rotate your top shoulder forward and extend your reach
- Insert the paddle into the water as far forward as possible and bury the paddle into the water
- Rather than pulling you paddle through the water, think about pulling past your paddle
- To stay in a straight line, take a few stokes on one side then switch to a few strokes on the other. Always remember to switch the position of your hands when your paddle changes sides

Basic Strokes: Turning with the Forward Sweep Stroke

- To turn left, place the paddle in the water on the right side. At the same time, turn your torso to the left side
- Keep a low stance and pull to the right, towards the tail with the paddle, while twisting and leaning to the left with your torso. You'll feel the board shift to the left quickly
- Basic Stokes: Turning with the Reverse Sweep Stoke
- To turn right, place the paddle near the tail and pull toward the nose while shifting your torso to the right — this will spin your board's nose to the right hand side — the more you bend your knees, the easier it will be to turn the board

Beginners Beware: Don't make these common mistakes

- Always hold the paddle with one hand on the top of the handle and the other on the shaft — a lot of people always want to hold the paddle like a broomstick, with both hands on the shaft — don't do it!
- Keep your feet parallel and spread shoulder width apart. Everyone wants to get in a surf stance, but that makes paddling on the flat water ten times harder. Plus, you will fall. Save your surf stance for the surf, and keep your feet parallel with toes pointed toward the nose.
- Make sure your grip on the paddle is shoulder width apart — short grips will give you a powerless stroke.
- Dip the blade fully into the water and take a long stroke, letting your large back muscles do the work. Many people put the full brunt of the stroke in the arms. Let your big back muscles do the brunt of the work.