How to Choose a Snowboard

The Ultimate Guide

NEVER SUMMER

Ready to Pick the Right Snowboard for Your Body Size and Riding Style?

Picking the right snowboard is an important first step to an enjoyable snowboarding experience because the wrong board can make it hard for you to stabilize yourself, turn, carve, and do anything else you're ready for (we see you eyeing the park 👀).

Let's just say the pros like Chris Corning aren't hopping on just any board—he's making sure his board is made for what he wants to do. But, you don't need a Rockstar sponsorship to get yourself on the perfect board.

You just need to know:

- What type of board to get
- The best shape and flex
- The ideal profile
- The length and width specific to your body
- How to get your board properly set up
- Board features impacting performance
- Quiver boards vs. Daily Drivers

We'll go over all of this information below so you're cruising down the pow or landing your first grab on the best board for you.

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Section 1

What Type of Snowboard Should I Get?

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The snowboard you should get depends on your experience, riding style, and what terrain you're riding on. There are 6 types of boards to choose from and we'll cover each one below so you can decide which one makes the most sense for you.

#1: Freestyle Board

A freestyle board is meant to be in the snowboard park, 1/2 pipe, catching air or doing tricks across the mountain. These also can be used as urban boards and are designed for quick maneuvering while you're doing tricks. They're ideal for any level of rider and be a great board for a beginner rider because of their forgiving softer flex, but are generally for snowboarders who know they'll spend most of their time in the park.

#2: All-Mountain Board

An all-mountain board is made for cruising through powder and catching air in the park. You can use these snowboards for groomers, trees, parks, jumps, and side hits. They are a good option for new riders who want to progress to an intermediate level.

#3: Freeride Board

A freeride board is made for the steeps, deeps, and trees. These are directional boards or designed for going forward down the mountain. They typically have a firm flex and greater vibration damping for stability at higher speeds. They are boards for the rider that loves freshly groomed slopes in the mornings, powder runs in trees and bowls and are not interested in riding in parks or doing tricks. Who is perfect for this board? Both expert riders and intermediate level riders on their way to expert level.

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#4: Freecarve Board

Freecarve boards are made for hard pack and groomer carving, so yes...they're for carving turns. The design of a freecarve board affords fast speeds on any terrain, which makes it an ideal board for intermediate or expert riders.

#5: Powder Board

Powder boards are designed to offer the best floatation in the deepest snow. They are boards for any level of rider who want the best performance for making fresh tracks in untouched snow, slashing pillow lines and surf inspired turns. These are the boards you want to take on that special Heli-skiing or snowcat trip.

#6: Splitboard

Splitboards split in half and turn into skis, allowing for access into the backcountry. They're different from other boards because they have uphill capability and use skins, clips, hooks, and specific splitboard bindings. These boards are for specific riders looking for that backcountry access and wanting to steer clear lift lines.

Now that you know what type of board is best suited for you, let's get you measured up to make sure you get the right length and width based on your size, ability, and preferred type of riding.

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Section 2

Snowboard Shapes and Flex

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There are multiple different snowboard shapes and 4 flex ratings. Each is going to give you a different experience, which is dependent on what you want to do with your board. First, let's go over the snowboard shapes so you can get an idea for which is best for you.

True Twin

- Tip and tail are the same shape
- Centered Mounting inserts, bindings can be mounted so you have an equal amount of nose and tail.
- Identical flex in both nose and tail

Directional Twin: (Specific to Shaper Twin)

- Tip and tail ae the same shape
- Centered Stance
- Tapered Tip to Tail: The tip is wider than the tail
- Fusion Profile: There is more rocker under front binding and more camber under back.
- Identical flex in both nose and tail

Asymmetrical Twin:

- Tip and tail are the same shape
- Centered Mounting inserts, bindings can be mounted so you have an equal amount of nose and tail
- Identical flex in both nose and tail
- There's a deeper sidecut on the heel edge for an improved edge hold

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Directional

- A set back stance
- A longer nose
- A stiffer flex in the tail and softer flex in the nose

A twin shaped board is smoother for riding switch or backwards. These boards have a centered stance, balanced flex pattern and most commonly found in freestyle/all mountain boards.

Boards with a slight setback stance can be twin in shape (like the Snowtrooper, Heritage or Infinity) or directional in shape (like the West Bound or Lady West) and mostly have a slightly directional flex pattern (stiffer in the tail and softer in the nose). These are generally all mountain boards and great for all types of riding and snow conditions. It gives you a more balanced feel for some freestyle but directional performance for freeriding.

Now, let's look at the flex ratings to see which makes the most sense for you as a rider. **There are 4 flex ratings:**

1. Soft
2. Mid
3. Mid-Firm
4. Firm

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Take a look below to see which flex rating works best for your riding style:

All Mountain: Mid to Mid Firm
- Stability
- Versatility
- Spin
- Carve
- Float

Freeride: Mid to Firm to Stiff
- Stability
- Smoothness
- Responsiveness
- Charge
- Float

Freecarve: Stiff
- Edgehold
- Responsiveness
- Stability
- Deep Carves

Freestyle: Soft to Mid
- Press-ability
- Maneuverability at Slow Speeds
- Lock in on Rails
- Tweak Grabs

Powder: Mid to Stiff
- Response
- Float
- Smooth

Splitboard: Mid Firm to Stiff
- Stability
- Charge
- Tour

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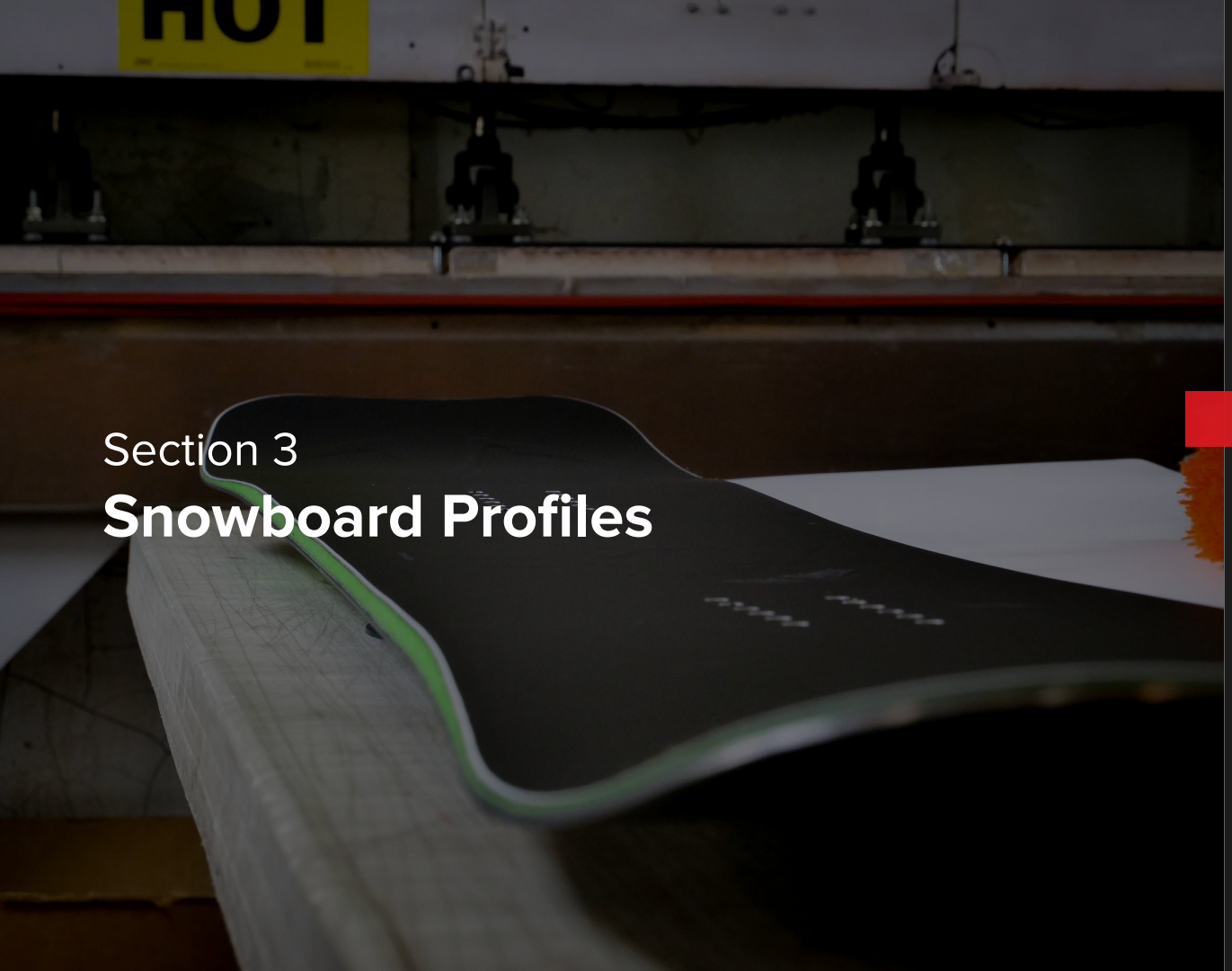

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Snowboard Profiles

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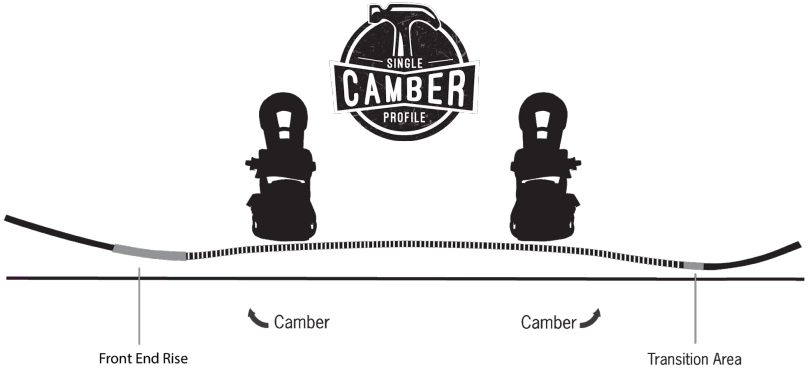
A snowboard's profile is based on what the board looks like when it's lying on a flat surface and you look at it from the side. Just like shape and flex, profile is important for the type of riding you want to do. Different profiles are better for freestyle, freeriding, etc. and they're all based on these two profiles:

- **Camber boards** tips and tails are turned upward and the middle of the board doesn't touch the ground.
- **Rocker boards** also have an upward turned tip and tail, but the middle of the board does touch the ground.

Camber

The Camber board has an upturned tip and tail and the middle of the board doesn't make contact with the ground. This gives it edge hold, pop, and stability on groomed trails or hardpack. If you're looking for speed, the Camber is most likely the profile for you.



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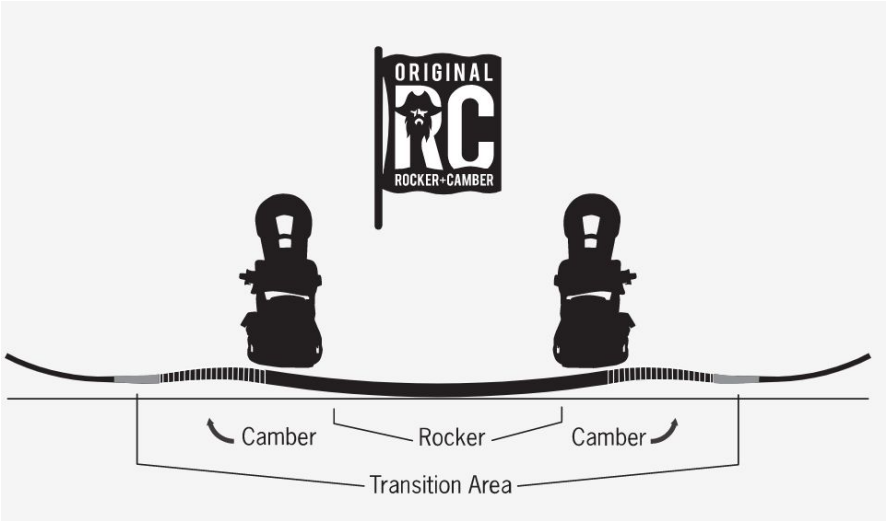
Original Rocker Camber

The OG Rocker Camber has a camber tip and tail, which means the tip and tail of the board are each turned upward. The Rocker profile between the feet makes the board touch the ground right in its middle. This is a mellow board that's not as aggressive or surfy as the profiles below.



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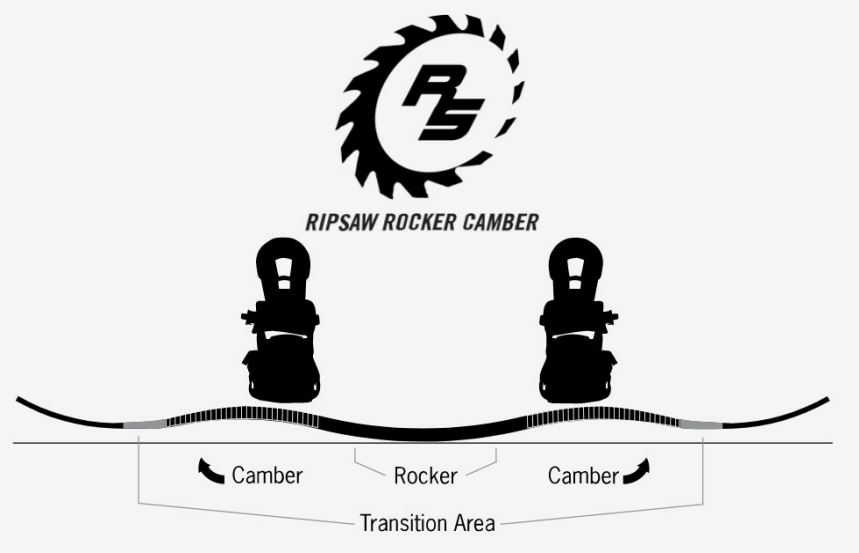
Ripsaw Rocker Camber

The Ripsaw Rocker Camber has a deeper camber tip and tail than the OG Rocker Camber, so the tip and tail are more aggressively turned upward but it has the same Rocker profile between the feet. This is what makes it a more aggressive board and an ideal board for riding through powder, but not for maneuverability or stability.



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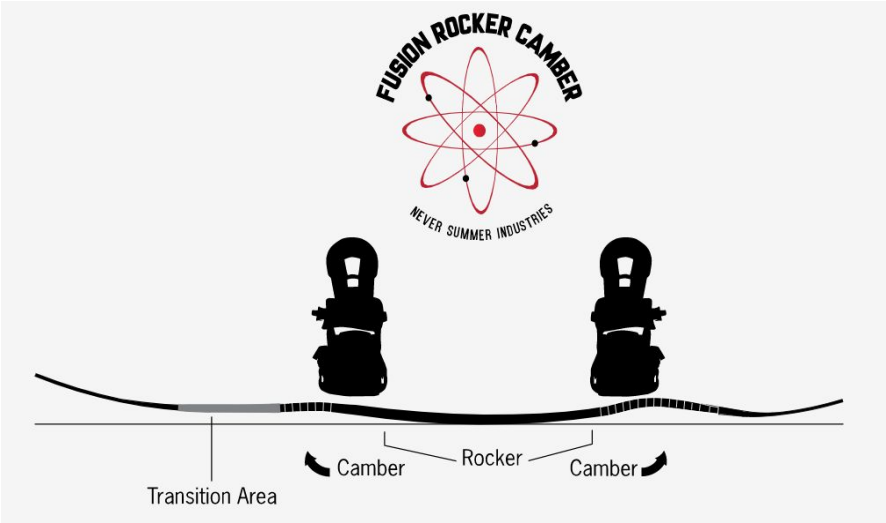
Fusion Rocker Camber

The Fusion Rocker Camber is a combination of the Original Rocker Camber and the Ripsaw Rocker Camber. The tip and tail are turned upward more than the OG Rocker Camber but less than the Ripsaw Rocker Camber, and the Rocker profile gives it that touchpoint to the ground right in the middle of the board. This gives the board a more surfy feel.



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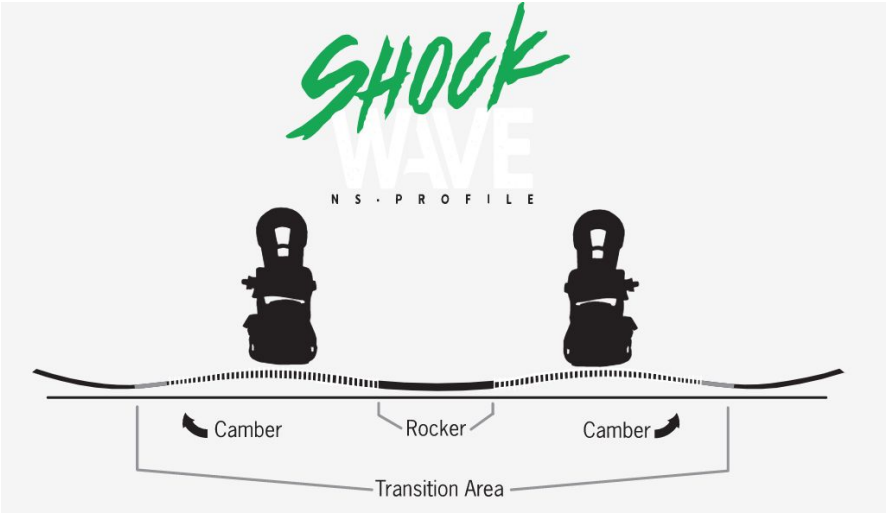
Shock Wave Rocker Camber

The Shock Wave Rocker Camber has extended Camber profile zones in the tip and tail and has a decreased Rocker profile between the feet. This makes the board have fewer touch points to the ground than the above profiles, giving it more edge hold, response, and pop.



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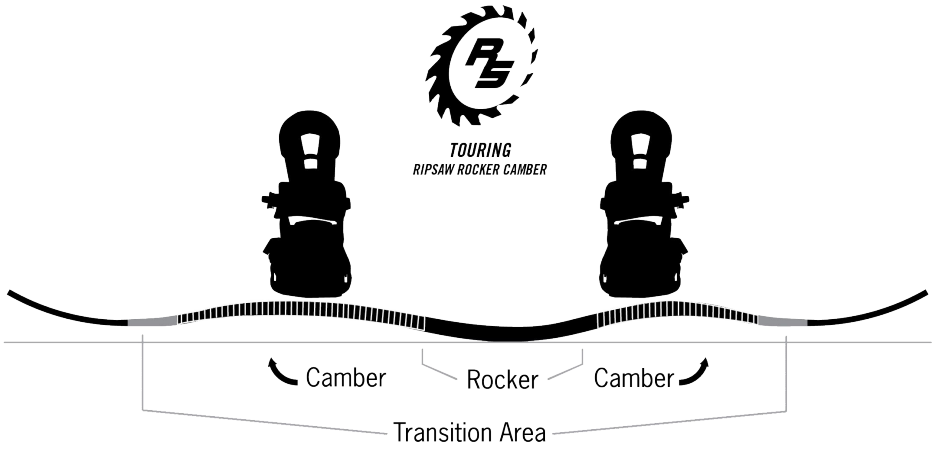
Touring Ripsaw Rocker Camber

The Touring Ripsaw Rocker Camber is utilized for backcountry touring. It provides greater traction for the ascent while maintaining the effectiveness of Rocker Camber on the descent.



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Section 4

What Length and Width Should My Snowboard Be?

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Step #1: Use Your Height, Weight, Boot Size and Riding Style

To figure out what size snowboard you need, you're going to use your height, weight, boot size and what type of snowboarding you're interested in.

For example, for freestyle riding a shorter board helps for being easier to do spin tricks, get up on rails or rotate in the air. Or for a beginner a board too long is hard to control, a shorter board is a little easier to learn on. Whereas, for freeriding a longer board has greater stability at speed. Or our volume or shaped boards can be sized up or down, depending on the model.

As a general rule for all mountain riding or getting your first board you don't want to have a board as tall as you or one that is below your chest. You want something that comes around your chest to chin.

Weight can play a part in the flex you want, for example a heavier person can utilize a firmer flex that won't fold up under their weight and stiffer board wouldn't be as forgiving for a thinner rider.

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Here's a Snowboard Sizing Chart you can use to get an idea for what size board you need based on your weight in pounds:

Rider Weight (lbs.)	Snowboard Size (cm)
110–120	128–136
115–130	133–141
125–135	139–147
135–145	144–152
140–155	149–157
150–165	154–162
160–175	159–167
170–185	160+
180–195	160+
190–205	160+

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Your boot size tells you how wide you need your board to be. You want a board that is proportionate to your boot size. The larger your feet, the wider board you need, and with a smaller foot a narrower board is more beneficial. Wider boards give you more surface area and a better float, which mitigates toe/heel drag and helps you get the speed with stability. A narrower board has an easier turn initiation and maneuverability.

Here's a sizing reference to figure out what width board is best for you based on your shoe size:

- Ladiess >9 = Men's Board
- Men <10 = Regular Width
- Men >10 = X
- Men >12 = DF

If you're an intermediate rider who knows they'll be in the park often or riding freestyle down the mountain, then consider getting a narrower board so you have the maneuverability you need.

Using height, weight, and shoe size ensures you get on the best board for you, combining the most comfortable board for your size, with the flexibility to try different things on the mountain.

Even if this isn't your first time on powder or in park...you'll still take these factors into account.

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Step #2: Consider Your Ability Level and Riding Style

Beginner and intermediate riders should use slightly shorter boards since they're easier to turn and maneuver. Choose the board that's the shortest option based on your height, weight, and boot size weight in the chart above.

Intermediate and advanced riders can opt for slightly longer boards, which have noticeably less bounce and wobble making them much more stable when you're catching speed down the mountain. Longer boards are perfect for freeriding because you can float in powder at a stable speed without feeling the bounce of a shorter board.

- Longer boards are for intermediate and advanced riders
- Shorter boards are for beginner and intermediate riders

If you're an intermediate rider and wondering where you fit on the shorter vs. longer board dilemma—ask yourself, "What am I going to be doing on the mountain?"

- If you're going to be freeriding and cruising while trying to catch speed without a lot of obstacles—go with a longer board.
- If you're a freestyle rider taking your board into the park and cutting through trees, —go with a shorter board.

Now that you know exactly what board best fits your body and riding style—let's get you geared up with the proper setup.

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Section 5

What's The Proper Setup For My Board?

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Getting the proper setup for your board requires the right stance, bindings, and boots. You can't do much on the mountain if your feet are squeezed into boots too small and your stance is too narrow . That's why this is an essential part of choosing the right snowboard...you want to personalize the snowboard to be ideal for your body.

Let's take a look at stance, bindings, and then boots.

The Proper Stance Setup

Your stance is how you stand on your board and there are 2 types of stances to choose from, either a Regular Stance or a Goofy Stance.

Here's the difference between the two stances:

- Regular Stance: Left foot forward
- Goofy Stance: Right foot forward

If you're not sure what foot you'd prefer to have forward, find a hardwood floor, put socks on and go in for a slide on your feet. You can also position yourself to do a cartwheel. Pay attention to which foot is in front. Whichever foot you put forward is most likely the best foot to have forward on your snowboard.

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Now that you know if you have a Regular Stance or a Goofy Stance, let's look at your Stance Width. How far apart are your feet from each other when you're on your board?

When it comes to Stance Width, taller riders have a wider stance and smaller riders have a more narrow stance.

- Wide Stance is best for taller riders
- Narrower Stance is best for shorter riders

Your stance is where you feel most comfortable and in control of your board, without having your feet too close together or far apart. If you are unsure, a good starting point is to measure your shoulder width and adjust your stance width to that.

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The Proper Binding Setup

There are 5 ways to position your feet on the board for a proper binding set up.

1. **Centered**
   - Bindings positioned allowing for an equal amount of nose and tail on the board. This is favorable for riding switch or backwards and freestyle snowboarding.
2. **Directional/Set-back**
   - Bindings are positioned set-back from the tip of the board. This is so you have more nose than tail for powder riding and directional performance. This is a common set up for freeride and many all-mountain boards.
3. **Ducked**
   - Both feet are pointing slightly outward, front foot at a positive and back foot at a negative angle. This is the most common stance in snowboarding today and works for a wide variety of styles and types of snowboards. It also makes it easier to ride switch stance and minimizes toe/heel drag.
4. **Positive Angled/Power Carve**
   - Both bindings are angled forward on the board. This stance is used by riders who like to carve and more commonly used on alpine or freecarve boards. Angeling the bindings forward eliminates overhang and puts a rider more forward or down the fall line of the mountain. It is not advantageous for riding switch stance or freestyle.
5. **Old School**
   - 0 degree on back foot and angled forward on front foot. Tried and proven but not as common as it used to be.

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Once you know where you'll position your feet on your board, you'll figure out your binding preferences for your base plate. **There are 3 types of binding preferences:**

- **Response:** A stiffer base plate for freeriding, giving you more stability
- **Freestyle:** a mid-flex base plate that allows for a natural flex so you can go from freeriding to freestyling
- **Surfy:** A softer base plate for powder and freestyling

The stiffer your base, the more stability you'll get which is why these are great for freeriding and cruising at faster speeds. The softer your base, the more flexibility you have making it great for freestyle riding.

Alright, now it's time to put some boots in those bindings...

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The Proper Boot Setup

Just like with your bindings, there are stiffer and softer boots. And, just like with your bindings, they are stiffer or softer for the same reasons. Depending on your riding style, you'll choose the boot that best fits your riding style.

- **Stiffer boots:** Great for response and stability making them ideal for freeriding
- **Softer boots:** Ideal for a natural flex and a surfy feel, making them great for freestyle riding

When it comes to the size of your boots, you want to make sure they're not too big or too small. The best boot for you has your toes right at the end without any pressure points. The reason you want your toes right at the end is that once they're broken in, they'll pack out about half a size, so if you start with boots too big, they'll be another half size too big once they're broken in.

Now that we've covered the basics of choosing the right snowboard, we'll cover the other features and types of boards you can take into consideration when grabbing your first board.

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Section 6

Board Features Impacting Performance

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We're going to go over some features and construction that add to your snowboarding experience. These add to the durability and performance of a Never Summer snowboard.

Board Materials

Your board is going to be made out of one of these five materials:

#1 Base

Either sintered (more durable, faster, stronger, and holds wax) or extruded. The entire Never Summer line is sintered.

#2 Carbon Fiber

Have flex and pop. Carbon boards are either longitudinal or torsional.

- Longitudinal:
  - Stiffer boards are ideal for stability
  - Softer boards are for pressabiilty

- Torsional:
  - Stiffer boards are great for stability at higher speeds with an amazing edge to edge response
  - Softer boards are ideal for maneuverability at slow speeds and have gas pedal feet

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#3 Fiberglass
Adds to durability and there are 3 types to choose from:

- Bi-Axial: Lightweight and strong
- Tri-Axial: Added stiffness and strength
- STS: Pretensioned and prehardened and maintains life and the shape of the board

#4 Wood Core
Polar and aspen hybrid. Lightweight, strong, and has a core profile.

#5 Rubber
Snappy, smooth, and cushy. Rubber is used to absorb vibration, The more rubber in a board, the more damp—meaning it's a smoother ride with less chatter and improved stability at higher speeds. A board with less rubber will be more snappy, giving it a crisper pop.

Sidecut Radius Options

The sidecut radius measures the radius of the side of the board and can change the angle of your turns. There are 3 types of sidecuts:

- **Deep sidecut radius:** Ideal for quick tight turns
- **Shallow sidecut radius:** Best for those long carves
- **PowerGrip sidecut:** Combines 5 radii along the edge to make entire edge effective when flexed, making it best for a deep to shallow to flat to shallow to deep ride

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Effective Edge

The effective edge is the length of the edge in contact with the snow and changes how long you can ride for. There are 2 types of effective edges:

- **Longer effective edges:** Provide more grip on carves and ride longer
- **Shorter effective edges:** More playful feel and ride shorter

Taper

Before we discuss the tip and tail of your board, we need to talk about taper. Taper is the difference between the width of the tip and tail of your board and this changes how your board floats in powder. More taper makes the tip of your board float better in powder by driving the trail down. It also helps with turning with the narrower tail making it easier to “brush around” or roll from edge to edge. Basically your tip and tail are going to impact how your board interacts with the snow underneath it

Your tip and tail can also be low profile, blunted or early rise. A low profile tip and tail reduce the plowing effect and a blunted tip lessens wing weight when you’re turning and in the air. An early rise tip increases the upturn of the nose of the board to add to powder floatation and glide in wet, slushy snow conditions.

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Section 7

Daily Drivers vs. Quiver Boards

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Daily drivers are the boards you can bring with you to do pretty much anything on the mountain.. They are your go-to boards when you're curious about both the mountain and park, and don't want to be held back by your board choice. These are the best boards for all-mountain riders.

Quiver boards are more specific to different conditions and style preferences. Here's the type of quiver board you want depending on the snow conditions or your riding style preference:

Freeride: Directional and stiff flex

All-Mountain: Twin or slightly set back with a mid flex

Surf Style and Powder: Shaped for one-directional snowboarding

Freestyle: Twin and soft flex

And that's how you choose the perfect snowboard for your riding style and body—making the investment in the right board for you can make the difference between those high-on-life rides, and the ones where you can't tell why you're so drained at the end of the run.

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