

Stand Up Paddle Boarding: A Beginner's Guide



A Beginner's Guide to Stand Up Paddle Boarding

Are you interested in trying stand-up paddleboarding, but aren't quite sure how to get started?

Stand up paddleboarding is one of the best water sports out there. It's an affordable sport, the learning curve is small, and stand-up paddleboarding offers a wide array of [health benefits](#).

So, how do you get started with the sport?

Check out this beginner's guide to learn everything you need to know about stand-up paddleboarding.

1. Get the Right Gear

Before you hit the water, you will need to make sure that you have the right gear with you. The gear you need or prefer may change as your skill level does and will also vary according to the environment you're paddling in. Generally speaking though, here's what a beginner paddleboarder should invest in:

- A reliable stand-up paddleboard and paddle
- Personal floatation device (aka, life jacket)
- Rescue whistle
- Flashlight or headlamp if paddling at night
- Water shoes or surf booties
- Leash
- Dry bag
- Carry bag
- [A pump](#) if you're using an inflatable board

Also, you'll need the appropriate gear to protect yourself from the sun. We recommend wearing a rash guard or wetsuit top, a hat, and sunglasses. And, don't forget to apply [plenty of sunscreen](#) if you will be out on a sunny day and always bring a water bottle.

2. Choose the Right Paddleboard

The paddleboard is obviously the most important piece of equipment when stand-up paddleboarding. It's also going to be your biggest investment. This is why you want to be sure that you choose the right one.

Get The Right Size Paddleboard For You

You should be able to easily stand up on your board and keep it stable. You don't want to be rocking back and forth nor feel scared to move. If you are struggling to keep your SUP stable, try a longer and/or wider board. A good recommendation for a beginner paddle board size is 11 ft long and 32 to 35 inches wide. Comfort should also be a strong consideration so that you aren't limited in your adventures.

Here are the different types of paddle boards to choose from:

All-Around

An all-around paddleboard is an excellent option for beginners and those who are unsure about what board type is best for them.

These boards are very stable and can handle most weather conditions- everything from small waves to choppy flat water. While they're not as agile and fast as other paddleboards, they're great for learning the basics and can be used for several activities.

Flatwater

As the name suggests, this type of paddleboard is best for those paddling in flat, tranquil waters and wanting to go long distances. If you want to bring a paddleboard with you when you're camping that you can take out on the shoreline, this is a great option.

Many flatwater paddleboards come with a storage section where you can place your sleeping bag, tent, and other camping gear.

Surf

If you live near the ocean or you're an avid surfer, consider investing in a surf paddleboard. These boards come in a wide range of sizes and are very easy to maneuver. If you're new to paddleboarding, you should choose a long surf paddleboard. The more experienced you are, the shorter your board can be. Note: Surf SUPs can be a little more challenging and aren't recommended for beginners. Once you have the basics down, then give it a go.

Touring

These paddleboards are very similar to flatwater paddleboards, and they're primarily used for racing or long distances. This type of board is good at cutting through choppy water and ensuring you track efficiently and effectively.

Inflatable

[Inflatable paddleboards](#) are another great option for beginners. The best thing about an inflatable paddleboard is the convenience- when it's deflated, it's very compact and can be taken with you wherever you go, even on an airplane!

Inflatable paddleboards also come with a softer deck which doesn't hurt as much when you fall on them and helps to reduce fatigue. These boards are also made from military-grade materials, making them not just extremely durable and long-lasting but incredibly high performing and easy to use. They can stand up to the toughest conditions and are becoming the preferred style over traditional paddleboards.

These boards can even be rolled up in a bag to place in your trunk when you go camping or bring with you when you fly. If you are on the go, like spontaneous trips, or have to travel to your destination, there is no doubt that an inflatable SUP is something you should strongly

consider.

3. How to Stand-Up Paddleboard

Once you've chosen the right board, it's time to hit the open waters. Here's what to keep in mind when paddleboarding for the first time:

Master Your Form to Paddle Correctly

To paddle correctly, you need to grip the paddle with one hand on the non-blade end on the top of the paddle and the other on the shaft. Grip the paddle with your hands approximately shoulder-width apart. This will give you a more efficient and powerful stroke versus a shorter grip width.

Stand up with a slight flex in your knees and your feet approximately shoulder-width apart. Your toes will be pointed toward the nose of the paddleboard, not standing sideways, or surf-style.

Also, remember that paddling is done with your core, not your arms. If you don't engage your core, you're going to tire out very quickly. If you want to prepare for your outings, concentrate on core, back, and shoulder exercises.

Launch Your Board

To launch your board correctly, walk into the water while carrying it by its center handle. Once you're about knee-deep, place the board on the water's surface.

Then, sit on the board with your knees, and once you feel ready, take a few paddles on each side and slowly stand up in the middle of the board.

Balance

If you're struggling to find your balance, remember to keep your core engaged. Make sure your feet are parallel and hip-distance apart with a slight bend in your knee.

Also, while it can be tempting to look down, you should keep your head up and look straight in front of you.

4. Safety First

The biggest thing you need to prioritize when stand-up paddleboarding is your safety. With a couple of quick and easy precautions, you will make sure that you have an enjoyable adventure.

Always Wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) / Life Jacket

This speaks for itself and goes without saying for all water sports activities. Don't suffer a tragic accident by not wearing a life jacket. A lot of accidents can happen on the water that wouldn't be as big of a deal on land. You never know what type of freak accident can happen, so do yourself and your loved ones a favor and always a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).

Always Use a Leash

By tethering yourself to the board with a leash, you won't become separated from your board or have it drift off if you fall. Even if you're an excellent paddleboarder, you should still tether yourself to the board.

If you fall off the board and you're already going to be extremely tired from your workout and regaining your composure in the water. It will be a lot easier to stay afloat if you're tethered to the board and can quickly get back to it and hold on to it. Additionally, windy and stormy conditions can make it so you easily lose your board. If you're tethered to it, you don't need to worry about this.

There are many different types of leashes you can use to tether yourself to the paddleboard. You can choose between straight or coiled leashes and leashes that tie around your ankle versus ones that tie around your calf.

Also, while you want a leash that won't break off, you also want to choose one that can be detached easily. This will make it so you can easily free yourself if the board gets stuck under a powerful current or if you become entangled with an underwater plant.

5. Traveling with a Paddle Board (SUP)

There are a couple of different types of travel to consider with a paddle board. First, we need to talk about how to transport your board once you get to your location. You can carry a traditional board yourself, but that can sometimes be tiring or awkward. To make it easier you can look into carrying straps or carts; both will make longer carries much more do-able.

The other type of transportation is how to get your paddle board from your house to the lake, or what if you are going on a vacation?

For a traditional paddle board you will need a car or truck rack to it to and from your destination if you are traveling by vehicle. These do not take too long to set up, but you will need to travel

slightly slower and more carefully on highways and tight turns. Make sure that you properly secure your paddle board. Traditional paddle boards are very hard to travel with on commercial airline flights, so you may have to look into shipping the board ahead of time.

With the progression of inflatable paddle board technology, they are becoming the preferred style amongst recreational paddle boarders. This makes both land and air travel with your paddle board a breeze. Now you can throw it in your back seat or put it in the overhead bin on an airplane, bus, or train and literally take your adventure anywhere! If you travel, buying an inflatable paddle board is a no-brainer. Inflatable paddle boards are now so durable, high performing, easy to use, and long lasting that they are becoming the overall preferred paddle board for most users.

Are You Ready to Try Stand-Up Paddleboarding?

Now that you have these tips, it's time for you to try stand-up paddleboarding! While you may be nervous at first, just remember that falling off is not a big deal- even advanced boarders fall. Once you get the hang of it, it is similar to riding a bike in that you can pick it right back up. Another great aspect of this great water sport is that you can enjoy whether you are at a beginner level or you can challenge yourself to take on wilder adventures.

No matter what level of paddleboarder that you desire to be, you will quickly get the hang of it and you'll be paddling away. Be prepared to thoroughly enjoy yourself while seeing the benefits of exercise, relaxation, and the comradery of friends.

[Let us know](#) if you have any questions or if you're looking to invest in a stand-up paddleboard, be sure to [check out our selection](#).

For more information about water sports fun, check out these related articles:

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