

Skills Courses

Basic Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills Course

This course introduces the novice to paddling a paddleboard in calm sheltered water.

Successful participants will receive the Basic SUP skills award.

Prerequisites	None
Course Length	2–3 hours, or more at instructor’s discretion
Class Ratio	1 instructor : 6 participants
Location	Enclosed and sheltered with easy landing options immediately present. This course may be conducted in a pool.
Conditions	Class-0 environment. See Water Classification for Lakes and Oceans

Basic Overview

Safety Skills	Paddling Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● falling off safely ● remounting the board ● use of a leash ● understanding weather and paddling conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● lifting and carrying a board ● choosing and holding a paddle ● mounting a board at a beach or dock ● prone paddling ● paddling while kneeling ● standing up ● paddling in a straight line ● forward stroke ● braking stroke ● sweep strokes ● paddling in windy or turbulent conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● board design ● board outfitting ● clothing ● safety equipment ● paddles ● injury prevention ● equipment care ● SUP resources ● transporting a SUP ● SUP heritage

Basic Safety Skills

Safety skills concentrate on the safety of the individual paddler while paddling near shore with uninterrupted stretches of easy landing opportunities.

Falling off safely — Paddlers should be confident falling off the board safely in shallow and deep water while maintaining control of the board and paddle. Competence in this skill does not have to be demonstrated by participants at this level but it should be explained and understood.

Remounting the board — Remount the board quickly in shallow and deep water, maintaining control of the paddle. Competence does not have to be demonstrated by participants at this level, but it should be explained and understood.

Use of a leash — Properly attach a leash and use it at all times. Understand the importance of using a leash.

Understanding weather and paddling conditions — Awareness of the current and forecasted weather and how it will affect the water and paddling conditions.

Basic Paddling Skills

Introduce an understanding of the essentials of manoeuvring and control of the SUP. Successful completion of this course indicates competence to paddle a SUP along an enclosed and sheltered shore in the company of a more skilled partner.

Lifting and carrying a SUP — Lift and carry the SUP in a safe and appropriate manner, using the handle (suitcase method), on the shoulder and balanced on the head.

Choosing and holding a paddle — Choose a proper length of paddle and demonstrate the proper grip.

Mounting and dismounting the SUP on your knees — Mount the board from a dock and/or beach to a kneeling position.

Paddle while in the prone position — Paddle 50 metres with your hands while in the prone position and with your paddle securely stowed.

Paddle in a straight line on your knees — Paddle 50 metres on your knees and maintain a straight line by switching sides as needed.

Stand up on the board — Transfer from kneeling to standing on the board while maintaining balance and stability.

Paddle in a straight line — Paddle forward in a straight line for 100 metres, switching sides as needed.

Forward Stroke — Awareness of the four parts of an efficient forward stroke: catch, power, exit and recovery.

Braking Stroke — Demonstrate the use of a braking stroke to stop the board.

Sweep strokes — Use a forward sweep stroke and reverse sweep stroke to turn the board.

Paddling in windy or turbulent conditions — The student will show confidence paddling in slightly windy or turbulent conditions by using more stable and lower profile paddling positions. Competence in this skill does not have to be demonstrated by participants at this level but it should be explained and understood.

Basic Knowledge

Participants should be familiar with the following topics as they pertain to stand up paddleboarding.

Board design — Parts of the board, different board shapes and their effect in the water.

Board outfitting — Basic outfitting of a board for personal comfort, control and safety.

Clothing — Clothing appropriate for paddling in different water temperatures and weather conditions.

Safety equipment — Basic safety equipment required for paddleboarding, and its proper use.

Paddles — The attributes of various paddle materials and how to choose the correct paddle length.

Injury prevention — Various warm-up procedures that can prevent common injuries and the importance of proper paddling technique for comfort and injury prevention.

Equipment care — Proper care of the paddle, lifejacket, throwbag or towline, leash and board.

Paddleboarding resources — Awareness of sources of information such as: Paddle Canada, provincial paddling associations, SUP-specific organizations, books, videos, websites, local clubs, retailers and outfitters.

Transporting a paddleboard — Know how to secure one or more paddleboards to a vehicle for safe and secure transport.

SUP heritage — Awareness of the heritage of paddleboarding, including the long Hawaiian traditions of both surfing and paddle sports, and their impact on modern stand up paddleboarding.

Basic Assessment

Activities focus on individual safety and comfortable paddling along a calm shoreline. While there is a great deal to learn at this level, the activities should concentrate on personal progress and an awareness of the need for future learning. Paddlers should leave the course encouraged to continue their learning and aware of their individual limitations.

Advanced Flatwater Stand Up Paddleboarding Skills Course

This course builds on the skills and knowledge gained in the Basic SUP course and introduces participants to paddling in more challenging conditions and to more advanced paddleboarding skills.

Successful participants will receive the Advanced Flatwater SUP skills award.

Prerequisites	Basic SUP course or equivalent experience Paddlers need time and practice to sufficiently develop the skills learned in the prerequisite course before registering in this course
Course Length	2–3 hours, or more at instructor’s discretion*
Class Ratio	1 instructor : 6 participants 1 instructor + 1 assistant : 8 participants**
Location	Sheltered waters with uninterrupted stretches of easy landing options
Conditions	Class-1 environment. See Water Classification for Lakes and Oceans

*Advanced Flatwater SUP can be combined with Basic SUP into a single course of 4–6 hours or more. Successful participants of such a combined course will receive the Advanced Flatwater SUP skills award.

**Basic SUP instructor may assist.

Advanced Flatwater Overview

Safety Skills	Paddling Skills	Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> towing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> launching into waves paddling in waves foot positions pivot turns efficient forward stroke draw strokes cross draw bracing edging paddling in wind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> equipment advanced board design heritage environment risk assessment and management

Advanced Flatwater Safety Skills

Safety skills concentrate on the safety of the individual paddler and paddling partners while paddling near shore with uninterrupted stretches of easy landing opportunities.

Towing — Demonstrate the ability to tow or assist an injured paddler 50 metres to shore. The injured paddler should be conscious and able to maintain stability while kneeling or lying on the board.

Advanced Flatwater Paddling Skills

Launching into waves — Launch the board safely into the waves with confidence while protecting the board, the fin, other paddlers and themselves.

Paddling in waves — Paddle directly into wind chop with good speed, balance and control over 100 metres. While quartering waves (paddling at an angle to the waves), show good speed, balance and control over 100 metres.

Foot positions — Use various foot positions and explain when each is most applicable.

Pivot turns — While underway, quickly rotate the board 180 degrees by shifting weight backwards and using sweep strokes.

Efficient forward stroke — With good speed and control over 100 metres, show good posture and use of body rotation.

Draw strokes — From a static start, move the board sideways 2 metres using the draw stroke and the sculling draw stroke. While moving forwards, move the board sideways using a draw stroke.

Cross draw — Emphasize good body rotation and a shoulder-safe body position.

Bracing — Prevent a capsize with a variety of braces, both on-side and off-side.

Edging — Understand how edging can assist turning or assist tracking and begin to show good edge control.

Paddling in wind — Discuss (and practice where possible) strategies for dealing with wind and wind generated waves including headwinds, tailwinds and crosswinds. Strategies might include paddling positions (prone, kneeling and standing), paddling side, stance, and using the wind and waves for added efficiency.

Advanced Flatwater Knowledge

The extent of knowledge required for safe paddling at this level is governed by the conditions within a sheltered bay. The following list is not exhaustive and is provided here as a guide to the nature and extent of knowledge necessary for safe and enjoyable paddling in a flatwater environment.

Equipment — Basic knowledge of the features and attributes of equipment including lifejacket and clothing, and requirements of Transport Canada.

Advanced board design — Understand the materials and design features, including fins, that are found on advanced race, surf or touring boards and discuss how they relate to specific paddlers and conditions.

Heritage — Participate in at least one symposium, or watch a video, or read a book or magazine article.

Environment — Discuss the impact SUPs have on the local natural environment.

Risk assessment and management — Instructor will facilitate group discussions on the following topics:

- **Water/ wind/ waves/ weather concerns and hazards** — The student will appreciate how water, wind, waves and weather interact within a paddling environment and the hazards associated with each. The student will know the precautions one should take in the

event of unfavourable paddling conditions.

- Hypothermia and hyperthermia — The student will be aware of signs, symptoms, treatment and prevention of both hypothermia (low core body temperature) and hyperthermia (heat related illness).
- Personal preparation (clothing, water, snacks, meds, etc.) — The student will recognize the importance of various personal items to be packed for a day-trip, considerations for varying weather conditions, and an understanding of the limitations of certain items (for example, cotton versus nylon or polyester and quick-dry clothing).
- Paddle Canada lifejacket policy — The student will recognize the importance of wearing a lifejacket at all times, except when surfing.

Advanced Flatwater Assessment

Evaluation is ongoing throughout the course. Participants can be evaluated through oral test, practical evaluation, written test and general observation. Participants will be graded *pass*, *weak*, or *fail* in each category. *Pass* is required on all categories, but one *weak* skill may be accepted at the discretion of the instructor.