

PADDLE SIZING GUIDELINES

It seems that there are as many different ways of sizing paddles as there are paddlers. These guidelines will help provide you with the basics to get started and are based on the goal of providing you with a paddle length that will put the whole blade in the water during the power phase of your stroke while leaving your body in a comfortable paddling position. This allows you to move your vessel through the water with efficiency, precision, grace and endurance.

CANOE – STRAIGHT SHAFT

- First, sit on a flat surface and measure the distance from your seat to your eye level.
- Next, add the distance from your boat seat to the water line.
- Finally, add the length of the paddle blade (as these vary with type and model).

This should be a good starting point for the overall length of your canoe paddle.

Adjustments for position should be considered. Paddlers in the bow generally prefer a slightly shorter and paddlers in the stern, prefer a paddle that is a bit longer.

CANOE – BENT SHAFT

The bent shaft canoe paddle was developed in the racing community to increase efficiency while reducing fatigue. The blade remains vertical in the power phase of the stroke providing the most surface area to propel the boat forward. This angle, which is typically between 7 to 14 degrees, also aids the blade in entering and exiting the water smoothly. While these paddles are great for forward strokes, they are not ideal for whitewater or other stroking styles, which require maneuverability.

Bent shaft sizes are generally about 2 inches shorter than straight shaft sizing.

RAFT – WHITEWATER PADDLE

Raft/whitewater paddles tend to be sized a bit longer than canoe. The extra length is to accommodate the extra distance to the water. Measurements depend mostly on your paddling position in the boat.

- For bow paddling positions, stand on a flat surface and measure from the ground to about mid-chest.
- For stern or guide paddling positions, measure from the ground to your collar bone.

As with all these guidelines, adjust for your personal preference and paddling style.

KAYAK – TOURING

Kayak touring paddle sizing depends on your torso length, boat beam width (widest point of your boat) and paddling style. There are two main paddling styles: Low Angle and High Angle.

Low Angle Paddling Style

The low angle paddling style is the most common style for touring. It is a relaxed, low cadence style that allows you to paddle long distances with less fatigue.

High Angle Paddling Style

This paddling style is more vertical and aggressive for power and maneuverability. This style utilizes a higher cadence and more advanced stroking techniques for more demanding conditions.

Touring Paddle Sizing Guide

Paddler Height	Boat Width	Approx. Paddle Length
5'0" – 5'10"	17" – 23"	220cm – 230cm
5'6" – 6'2"	23" – 25"	230cm – 240cm
Over 6'3"	Over 25"	240cm – 250cm

Use this chart as a starting point in your selection. Once you have paddled a bit you will be able to fine tune your paddle size. Subtract about 10cm for crank shaft paddles.

KAYAK – WHITEWATER

Choosing a whitewater kayak paddle greatly depends on the type of paddling that you will be doing. Creeking and river running paddle lengths tend to be longer than playboating/free-style lengths. Recreational and inflatable kayakers tend to be wider than hard shell kayakers and require longer paddle lengths as well. The chart below can be used as a general starting point, but experience and personal preference will ultimately determine your optimum paddle length.

Hard Shell Kayak Paddle Sizing Guide

Paddler Height	Approx. Paddle Length
Under 5'2"	188cm – 194cm
5'0" – 5'8"	191cm – 197cm
Over 5'6"	194cm – 203cm

Recreational/Inflatable Kayak Paddle Sizing Guide

Paddler Height	Approx. Paddle Length
Under 5'2"	220cm
5'0" – 5'8"	230cm
Over 5'6"	240cm

SUP

There are many various methods and opinions on the best way to size your SUP paddle. Here is a very basic guideline to get you started and as with all paddling styles, you will fine tune your paddle length with experience.

- Stand on a flat surface and raise your hand straight over your head.
- Measure the distance from floor to the bend in your wrist.

Adjust for preference and style (i.e. surfers usually like paddles a bit shorter than touring lengths). Alternatively, take your height and add 8" for surfing length and 10" for touring.

Best Advice - Get out to an event where you can paddle many different styles and various lengths. There really is no substitute for experience.

See you on the water!

Team Sawyer