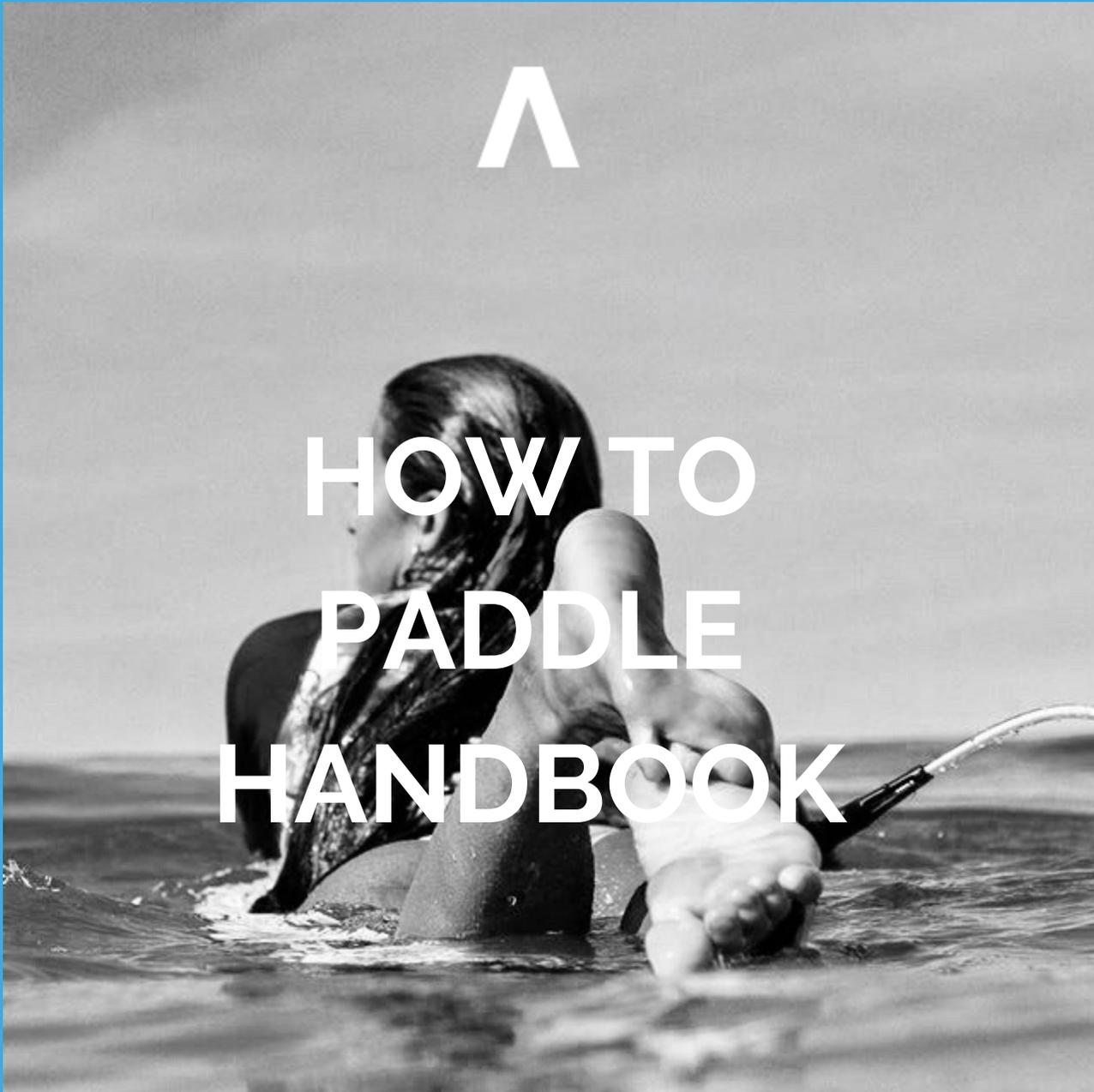


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# HOW TO PADDLE HANDBOOK





The single most important skill in developing your surfing is paddling. Surprisingly, most people are held back in their progress, because of their padding technique and fitness and not from their surfing ability.

Why is it so important?

It is everything!

Surfing better starts with paddling efficiently. A good, strong paddling technique is one of the most crucial elements of your surf progression.

To put it simply - the better you paddle, the more waves you catch, the quicker you progress.

There are two important factors you need to consider:

1. Minimize your resistance and drag - This is achieved through the correct positioning on your board
  2. Maximising your propulsion - This is achieved by having the correct paddling technique
- So let's take a look at these two important factors.



When we talk about resistance we want to look closely at how to minimizing your drag through the water.

Drag occurs because:

Your surfboard - nose, rails

Your equipment - t-shirt, legrope

Your body - legs, arms

Let's say you are wearing a t-shirt, with your nose rising up out of the water and your legs are apart this would a great example of maximizing your resistance.

What you are looking for most is GLIDE on top of the water creating little friction as you can between your board, yourself, and the water.

Lying down on your board in its sweet spot will greatly help this. You will notice an immediate difference if there is too much weight either side or towards the front or back of the board.

To minimize your resistance in the water, you will need to focus on these four key areas.

1. Correct body placement on your board
2. Appropriate board choice for your ability
3. Wearing the right clothing
4. Fitness levels



## How to minimize your resistance

### 1. Correct Positioning

- √ Head still - helps with your speed and your efficiency in the water
- √ Legs together - creates less drag
- √ Arch your back - make sure your nose is at least 1-2 inches out of the water
- √ Find your sweet spot in the center of the board - If you're too far back, your nose will rise upwards, if you're too far forward you will nosedive

### 2. Board Choice

If you are on the wrong board you will know straight away from how successful you are with your paddling and whether or not it feels easy.



A bigger board will automatically give you better glide so don't come down to much in size until you are:

A better paddler  
A fitter surfer

The shorter the board the more drag there is, the better you have to be at paddling. Simple.

### **3. Wearing The Right Clothing**

Wear what you want, but if you're struggling to paddle, we would suggest swapping your t-shirt for skins or a tighter fitting rashie. A t-shirt or loser fitting clothing will give you more drag. If you surf in colder countries and have to wear wetsuit, boots, gloves etc you will also notice more drag.

### **4. Fitness**

The most effective training for surfing is surfing - and the same goes for paddling. Very few people do exercises that correctly develop the muscles and endurance levels required to surf for a decent period of time before fatigue sets in.

The overwhelming common theme is the early onset of fatigue due to the repetitious motion of paddling.

Often beginner surfers give up because they think that they aren't good enough, its actually because they are not fit enough.



## Common mistakes

X If you're feeling off balanced, don't spread your legs to compensate. This will create more drag because your legs will be hanging off the board in the water

X If your body weight is off to one side, it will start to sink. The sinking part of the surfboard then creates resistance with the water while moving forward

X The wrong board choice ie; too small, will be detrimental to your progress. You have to get the right board for your weight and size. Otherwise, the board will sink and you will find it really difficult to pull yourself through the water to catch waves

X Wearing any baggy or loose fitting clothes will create more resistance. A lot of beginners want to look cool and wear T-shirt but they don't realize they are having to work harder because of the extra drag

X If you are not fit enough you simply won't have the paddle power to get yourself onto waves

X When you're too tired to paddle, try to resist placing your head on the board as this will create more drag. Keeping your head up gives you more stability, more mobility and more visibility of the waves in front of you



Maximise your propulsion is, in other words - getting the most power out of every stroke. How do you do that? It comes down to your reach. Your reach needs to be long, deep full arm strokes which use less energy so you can surf longer.

What this actually means is your pushing more water, allowing you to go faster, helping you catch more waves.

Quick short strokes (like a penguin) will get you very little waves, and you will overcompensate with late takeoff and bad positioning.





## How to maximize your propulsion

√ Keep your hands straight and relaxed under water. Paddling is the same as swimming freestyle / front crawl. This will allow you to drive through the water, making your paddles more effective

√ Full arm extension with every stroke. Your front arm is fully extended so your hand can penetrate the water far in front of you. Your backhand pops out of the water only when it is fully extended at the back, after a full range motion

√ Elbows high - this keeps your hand and forearm in a vertical position from the start of your stroke. When your hand and forearm are vertical, then you are able to hold the water and propel yourself forward with a greater surface area for a greater length of time

√ Good rhythm - paddle with one arm at a time

√ Slight roll - the hip-driven stroke is initiated at the hips and the shoulder driven stroke is initiated from the shoulders. You want to simultaneously work the upper and lower body together with a gentle rock onto your hips as you reach out to your strokes. You should feel this in your core area

√ Chin up - keep chest/head up so you can see and then lunge down into the stroke

√ Place feet together - to make sure you don't compensate an unbalanced position with lower body



√ Bend your arms - almost compressing water against the bottom of your board. Keep your strokes close to your rails

### **Common mistakes**

X Do not put your hands in a "cupped" position. This reduces the surface area your hands push under water, limiting your propulsion. Do not put excessive tension in your hands, this is a waste of energy

X No penguin paddles. Short paddles that splash the water when penetrating, will get you nowhere. You're looking for a smooth entry

X Only paddle one arm at a time. Double swooping is not a good idea for your speed and you lose more of your energy

X Don't paddle too wide. You want your strokes to come in like an S shape, nice and close to your board

X Rocking too much on your hips will create unsteadiness. It's not a forced technique, your looking for a more slight, natural roll. Needless to say, you're not going to have a smooth trajectory through the water

GOOD LUCK OUT IN THE WATER!