



# How to...

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
In 2023, about 4 million people in the US went paddleboarding.



## Try out paddleboarding

Have fun and improve your strength and balance with this popular water activity.

Stand up paddling (also called paddleboarding or SUP) is a recreational water sport with roots in Hawaii in the 1940s. In recent years, it has soared in popularity across the country. SUP is a fun way for kids and families to get out on the water and enjoy the outdoors. You can even find competitive paddleboard racing competitions. If you've been curious about the sport, here's how to get started.

### Know how it works

Paddlers typically start out in a kneeling position on a sturdy floating board in the calm waters of a lake, pond, or ocean. They hold a single long paddle in both hands, then dip the oar's blade into the water and pull it backward to propel the board forward. Alternating strokes on each side helps steer the board. When they are comfortably paddling and picking up speed, they stand to continue paddling. To keep balanced, it helps to stand up straight and look ahead, not down at your feet.

### Get the right equipment

Paddleboards are made of foam or resin and come in a variety of sizes for kids and adults. Some boards are

inflatable. You will need to wear a swimsuit and a life jacket. It's a good idea to also wear sunscreen or a long-sleeved shirt and a hat to protect yourself from the sun. A rental facility or paddling clinic can loan you a youth-sized board, paddle, and life jacket. Many outdoor stores also rent equipment.

### Take a class

Have a parent help you search online for a youth stand up paddling clinic at a beach, lake, or pond in your area. For your first few times, aim to practice in calm, shallow water.

You can take a beginner's lesson at a local paddleboard center, which will also provide the equipment. You will learn how to climb onto the board in shallow water, move from your knees to a standing position, and use the paddle correctly. You will also learn to attach a leash from the board to your ankle. This keeps your board from floating away if you do fall into the water.

### Keep practicing

As you gain more experience, you'll learn how to steer, turn, and come to a stop. The most important thing to remember—besides safety—is to have fun!



Begin on your knees.

### Paddle on land



Land paddling, which is also called skate poling, is just what it sounds like—paddling a board on the ground instead of on the water. Here's how to ride safely.

**Start on a long board.** A longer board will have wheels set wide apart and feel more stable to stand on than a shorter board. With an adult, try out a few in a paddling shop, along with a stick.

**Gear up.** Protect yourself from tumbles. Wear a helmet, wrist pads, knee and elbow pads, and closed-toe shoes.

**Learn from a pro.** With an adult's help, ask a paddling or skateboard shop about lessons with an experienced instructor.