

# Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) Workbook



# Guide to Stand Up Paddleboarding

## Introduction

This workbook is designed to help you get outside and on the water! And includes tips to help you make it simple. Learn where to go, how to decide which trails to do, and what gear makes things easier!

## Brought to you by HTXoutdoors and Bayou City Outdoors

We are Houstonian's who love being outdoors. We like to have FUN and are looking to EXPLORE! Together HTXoutdoors and Bayou City Outdoors host over 100 events PER MONTH!

We have introduced hundreds of Houstonians to the Great Outdoors with:

- 101 classes online
- Hands on 101 training
- Advanced training
- Hosting events with expert event leader to show you the ropes
- Partnering with other Houston businesses to grow and expand small businesses in the Houston area. We love supporting locals and small businesses!
- Providing equipment for you to test out various activities such as kayaking, SUP, camping
- And bringing together a great group of people at the same time!

What's the difference? HTXoutdoors tends to be for 20's and 30's and Bayou City Outdoors tends to be 40s and up. Members of each club has access to the other so there is no wrong pick.

Each month, we offer events open to the public so you can see what it's all about for yourself.

[HTXoutdoors Public Events](#)

[Bayou City Outdoors Public Events](#)

# Guide to Stand Up Paddleboarding

In 2017, we bought 6 paddleboards for members of BCO and HTXO to use for free! In the past 5 years of leading events, hundreds of members have enjoyed the water. Many learning how to paddleboard for the first time.

After trying it a few times, many members end up buying their own boards and with confidence!

- Confidence because they know they already enjoy paddleboarding
- Confidence because they know what to buy
- Confidence because they know we'll help them figure out all the ins and outs of the gear they bought so they setup it properly, and
- Confidence they know they'll use the board because they have people to go with!

By the end of this workbook, we'll bust some myths and get you past the most common challenges. Plus! Provide all of the information you need to get started!

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*Paddleboarding is a fun, easy way to go play on the water. With a paddle and board, you can roam across the lake or paddle to the middle and relax.*

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## Myths about Stand Up Paddleboarding:

### #1 – You must stand up to paddleboard

Many people use their paddleboards sitting down or kneeling in the beginning. And regardless if you want to stand up, you should always move away from docks shores and any things that you can hit your head on if you fall while standing up. Even shallow water! If you fall in shallow water you might have reflex to just step off and this cause an injury to your ankle, knee or other parts of your body. It's best to fall in a star fish shape into deeper water.

### #2 – You need arm strength to paddle

Similar to kayaking, it's not about your arm strength. There are ways to paddle that uses your entire body. If you lean forward and pull your hips forward, you don't even have to "pull water" with our paddle. :D

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## Challenges people face when trying to get started

- Don't know where to go (good water!)
- Don't have people to go with
- Never did it before so nervous to go for your first time
- Not sure what gear to get or where to get it
- Weather (Wind, currents, wakes, etc)

## Gear – what to buy and where to buy it

### *Paddleboards & Parts*

**Inflatable vs hard board** – Hard boards are going to be more stable but inflatables are not a big difference. Especially if you get them to the required PSI requirements. If you're using a hand pump to fill an inflatable board, many people stop at "good enough". You can use the board but it'll have a little sag. Now, they make so many electric pumps that you can really get the board to a better PSI.

Cons of a hard board – they are harder to transport and store for most people. Some places to think about storing your hard board are... behind your couch. In your shower.

**Electric Pump** – The electric pumps can get expensive, but they make having an inflatable SUP so much easier. Things to consider... do you need the 'cigarette lighter' plug (12v) in your car to inflate or is it a regular plug (110) or battery operated. Does it go to the PSI you need. Many manufacturers of boards are making pumps that work specifically with your board. You can't always get a brand that doesn't match. I like to consider using the hand pump as an extra workout. Because many times, especially in the beginning,

**Length, width and height of board** – Longer, thicker, wider boards tend to be more stable. When you get a stable board, sometimes you lose maneuverability, making your board harder to turn quickly. A good size for a beginner is 6 inches thick, just over 10 feet long. The 4 inch thick boards will turn better typically but it's harder to get your balance. Also, for inflatables, you can't skimp or you'll get more of a bend in the middle.

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**Material on top of the board** – you want a material that will be non-slip and won't heat up too bad in the sun. Most boards have a foam in the middle. If the whole board is 1 material, take a closer look at reviews and product description.

**Handles** – The easiest way to carry the board is if there is a handle in the middle of the board. I've only seen a couple of boards that do not have this option and it was very difficult to carry (even if they come with a strap.)

**Bungee cords, gear rings** – you definitely want a board that has gear rings (d-rings). You can add your own bungee cords or clip things to the gear rings. Such as water bottles, life jackets, radios, coolers, dry bags, etc.

**Ankle leash** – I personally am not a huge fan of ankle leashes. If you have a rope on the water, you need to carry a knife. If you fall off, the ankle leash can get caught on things under the water that you can't see. If you don't have a knife, it could be hard to get lose. Without an ankle leash, if you fall the board will go further away from you so you might have to swim more to get to it. Just hold on to your paddle and wear your life jacket and you'll be just fine.

### *Paddle*

You can get paddles that are made for you size or you can buy an adjustable one. Adjustable paddles are cheaper but they will sink! I mean all of them will sink if you leave them floating alone long enough. But the adjustable paddles have holes so you can set the height.

You also want to look at the material. The cheaper the paddle, usually the heavier it is. Lighter paddles will be easier on your arms.

The angle of the blade will impact have smooth of a stroke you can take. If it's too straight, you're paddle may not glide into the water easily, causing drag which may slow you down or turn you more or less than you intend.

The handle at the top is called a T-Grip. You want a paddle that is comfortable to grip.

**Height of paddle** – You want a slight bend in your arm when you hold your paddle straight. Typically, you're adding about 9 inches to your height. If you're sitting or kneeling, you can keep your paddle shorter. When you're standing, if you're paddle is too short, you won't get as strong of a stroke. If it's too long, you might get extra drag, put the blade too far in the water or hit the water at weird angles.

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## *Life Jackets*

In Texas, you have to have a Type III or better life jacket on all vessels. Paddleboards, kayaks, boats... all count as vessels. You don't have to wear it by law, but you must have it with you. Until you're comfortable paddling, falling in and swimming to your board, we recommend wearing your life jacket.

When picking a life jacket, get at least a Type III. All life jackets have the rating printed on it. From Type I to Type V. Type V is typically for white water rapids. Some life jackets are throwable, and some are wearable. As long as it's Type III, it should be okay in Texas but ALWAYS check the rules for the body of water where you're paddling.

Inflatable life jackets – they make life jackets that you can wear as like a fanny pack or small backpack. If you need in the water, you can pull a string to inflate. They tend to be more expensive and you might get stopped by law enforcement because they can't tell from a distance that you have a life jacket.

## *Water Clothes*

This is going to be your preference. Some people wear bathing suits. Others wear long sleeves and/or pants for better sun protection. Keep in mind, when you're on the water, the sun reflects off the water and you'll tend to burn more or have bigger impacts from the sun when you're on the water. Hats and sunglasses are a good idea but keep in mind, if you fall in... these will be the first to go! So, use straps. :D

## *Dry Bag*

If you want to bring your phone, car keys, wallet, etc with you, it's best to get a dry bag. You can get these for cheap now but you don't want to go too cheap because you want it to work. :D

## *Fins*

Many SUPs come with a spot for 3 fins. And they may come with the large, shark fin, medium fins and small fins. You do not need all 3! You'll use the fins depending on the weather, water currents and measurability desires. If you use the large 'shark' fin and 2 other fins, you'll track straighter. That means it's easier to go straight and harder to turn quickly. The small and fewer fins you use, the more you'll turn and the harder it'll be to go straight.

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If you know you're going thru a lot of shallow spots, you probably want smaller fins. As a beginner, get a board that gives you flexibility in fin quantity and fin sizes. The more experience you get, the more specific board you'll want to get to match exactly what you're doing with the board.

**Where to store gear** – not the garage or your car in summer! The glue and material will start to break down if you store your boards in hot places. It's best to keep inside at cooler, drier temperatures.

Don't store your gear wet. Most of the bags that come with the inflatable boards are large enough where you don't have to fold them tightly like you do with tents. Therefore, you they don't necessarily have to be 100% dry before you put them away.

## How to get started paddling

### **How to carry your board:**

Lean it up against your leg so handle is on the outside. Use the handle to pick up and tuck it under your arm

### **Paddle on calm water:**

When you're starting out, go to calm water that has easy entry and exit points.

### **Getting on the board:**

Start by kneeling. The handle should be about the middle so center yourself over the handle. Both ends should be similar distance out of the water.

### **Balance:**

Your feet should be parallel, about hip-width distance apart, centered between the rails.

Keep toes pointed forward, knees bent and your back straight. Balance with your hips—not your head. Keep your head and shoulders steady and upright, and shift your weight by moving your hips. Your gaze should be level at the horizon. Avoid the temptation to stare at your feet.

### **Form:**

If you're paddling on the right, your right hand is lower and on the paddle shaft and your top (left) hand is on the top of the grip.

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Keep your arms straight and twist from your torso as you paddle. Think of using your torso to paddle rather than your arms.

To go in a reasonably straight line, paddle about 4 or 5 strokes on one side, then switch to the other. When you switch sides, you'll reverse hand positions.

### Weather

The biggest challenge to paddleboarding is the weather! Know when it's safe and what to look out for. The weather can change so quickly. If you're in the middle of the lake and a storm rolls in quickly, the water can get very chopping (waves) and the winds can be hard to paddle in.

**Wind:** Most of the time you're going to have some wind. We recommend that you paddle into the wind first. This way, when you turn around it SHOULD be easier to get back. We say SHOULD because the wind can always change directions and then you're paddling into the wind both directions.

You can tell if the wind is getting stronger based on what the water looks like. If it's clear, glassy water, there is little to no wind. As you start seeing ripples, the wind is picking up. If the ripples start turning into waves, it's probably time to get off the water.

Keep an eye on the sky. If you see dark clouds coming towards you, start making your way closer to the shore. You don't necessarily have to get out, just want to be in a better position to get out if you need to.

**Rain:** If this lightly raining, it's fine. Heavier rains may impact your visibility and bring wind or even lightening. If you have thunder, it's time to get off the water as fast and safety as possible.

**Hot or Cold:** Paddleboarding is great because you can do it during all times of the year! In the summer, make sure to bring plenty of water and sun protection. Remember, the sun reflects off the water making sunburns worse when you're on the water. Long sleeves and pants made for the water is recommended. You can get cheap water close with sun protection at Academy.

You can paddle when it's cold too. You can buy winter water clothes but they can get expensive. Normally I wear the same thing as summer but might wear water gloves or water socks.

And then don't forget to bring dry clothes!

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## Gear Recommendations

Some of the gear listed below I do get a commission if you purchase but I only recommend gear that I have personally used, or members have personally used and liked.

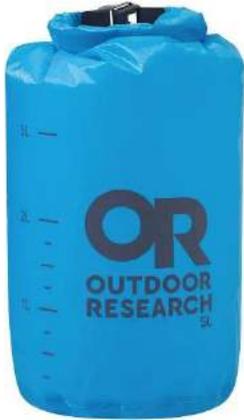
This section will have lots of links, photos and gear descriptions.

 A collection of Roc inflatable stand-up paddleboard gear. It includes two views of the board (top and side), a black carrying bag with 'ROC' branding, a black pump, a black leash, a black fin, a black paddle, a black strap, and a black pump handle.	<p>Roc Inflatable Stand Up Paddle Boards with Premium SUP Paddle Board Accessories, Wide Stable Design, Non-Slip Comfort Deck for Youth &amp; Adults – 10'x33"x6"</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3DAmTUY">https://amzn.to/3DAmTUY</a></p>
 A collection of Highpi inflatable stand-up paddleboard gear. It includes two views of the board (top and side), a black carrying bag with 'HIGHPI' branding, a black pump, a black leash, a black fin, a black paddle, a black strap, and a yellow '1 YEAR WARRANTY' badge.	<p>Highpi Inflatable Stand Up Paddle Board 11'x33"x6"W Premium SUP Accessories, Backpack, Wide Stance, Surf Control, Non-Slip Deck, Leash, Paddle and Pump</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3THDtb3">https://amzn.to/3THDtb3</a></p>

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 A photograph of the Body Glove Performer inflatable SUP package. It includes a blue and orange inflatable board, a black pump, a black and orange paddle, and a black carrying bag with a yellow logo. The board has a mountain graphic and the word 'PERFORMER' on it.	<p>Body Glove Performer 11'x34"x5.4" Inflatable Stand Up Paddle Board Package (Costco)</p> <p>Pretty much any board from Costco should be good. :D</p> <p><a href="https://www.costco.com/body-glove-performer-11'-inflatable-stand-up-paddle-board-package.product.100795963.html">https://www.costco.com/body-glove-performer-11'-inflatable-stand-up-paddle-board-package.product.100795963.html</a></p>
 A photograph of the Easy Eddy Three-Piece Modular SUP. It shows the board disassembled into three pieces, a blue and black paddle, a black pump, and a blue carrying bag. The board has a grey and black striped deck and a red and black logo.	<p>Easy Eddy Three-Piece Modular Paddle Board (SUP) 10.2'x32"x5.5"</p> <p>Easy to setup. Easy to transport than 1 piece hardboard. Harder to transport than inflatable.</p> <p><a href="https://easyeddypaddleboards.com/">https://easyeddypaddleboards.com/</a></p>

 	<p>ALBINA Rechargeable Paddle Board Pump - 20 PSI Powerful Electric Paddleboard Pump for 4-5 Boards with Auto-Off Function, Easy Inflate/Deflate SUP Air Pump</p> <p>Charge with wall outlet or car 12V. Can blow up SUP away from car.</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3TIDFGZ">https://amzn.to/3TIDFGZ</a></p>
 <p>Digital LCD Display &amp; Button Controls</p>  <p>Adjustable PSI Air Pressure Settings</p>  <p>Convenient Carry Handle</p>  <p>Powered via Car Power Outlet 9.8 FT</p>  <p>Long Flexible Air Hose 3.3 FT</p>  <p>Disassembles for Space-Saving</p>	<p>Air Pump, AGPTEK Electric Air Pump 20PSI Digital Electric Air Pump, 12V DC Car Connector, Intelligent Dual Stage &amp; Auto-Off Function, Great for Paddle Boards, Inflatable Boats and Kayaks</p> <p>Only works with the car 12V outlet. No standard wall plug. Must inflate SUP close to car.</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3zIHs4C">https://amzn.to/3zIHs4C</a></p>

 A bright blue, cylindrical dry bag with a roll-top closure. The bag features the 'OR' logo and the text 'OUTDOOR RESEARCH' in black.	<p>Outdoor Research Beaker Dry Bag – Classic Waterproof Outdoor Gear, 5L</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3gCbXxd">https://amzn.to/3gCbXxd</a></p>
 A black, oval-shaped waterproof speaker bundle. It includes a speaker with the 'JBL' logo and a separate black carrying case with a zipper and a small red tag.	<p>JBL Clip 4 Waterproof Portable Bluetooth Speaker Bundle with gSport Carbon Fiber Case</p> <p>If you like to enjoy some music out on the water, this is a great option! Don't forget to put your phone in a dry bag.</p> <p><a href="https://amzn.to/3Nk3Q4u">https://amzn.to/3Nk3Q4u</a></p>

Find gear recommendations for other activities on our [Amazon Shop Page](#). I do receive a small commission for items purchased view my affiliate links but it doesn't change the price you pay. <https://htxoutdoors.com/gear-reviews/>

### Where to go:

Be caution of waters that have a lot of alligators in a small space, like the bayous or swampy lakes. Other lakes are large enough where you should have a problem. Remember, alligators typically keep to themselves unless provoked or they are protecting their nests. Nests hatch around August. Colder months, alligators are usually at the bottom of the water, with very little moment, regulating their breath to conserve energy.

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### **Lake Woodlands:**

If you rent a SUP from Riva Row, you'll start out in the channel which has less wind. If you're bringing your own board, put in at North Shore Park. Sometimes it can be windy. If it's windy, paddle into the wind first. That way it should be easier to paddle back. I say should because sometimes the wind changes directions. Keep an eye on the weather.

If you paddle across the lake and enter the channel, there will be less wind. You can paddle all the way down to Riva Row, turn around and circle an island to get back.



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### **San Marcos – Rio Vista**

Head to San Marcos and setup for the day at Rio Vista Park. You can paddle upstream or plan a shuttle and do some white water SUPing downstream.

This photo is from 2017. Our boards still have the tags on them. :D

### **Lake Livingston State Park**

There are some calm sections on this lake from the State Park property. Motorized boats are allowed so you might encounter some wakes. Hit the wake at an angle, don't be parallel.

