# Skills

# Skills

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  + [Going in a straight line](/skills/straightline)
  + Starting
  + Turning
  + Drafting
  + Rough Water
  + Wind
  + Beach Starts
  + Long distance
  + Sprints
  + Technical
* Racing
  + [Prep](/skills/prep)
  + Kit
    - [Boards](kit_boards)
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  + Race Phases
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* Planning
  + [Goals](planning_goals)
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  + [Mindset](planning_psychology)
  + [Logistics](planning_logistics)
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# Drafting Step 1

| # | Diagram | Notes |
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# Drafting 101

| # | Diagram | Notes |
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# Backside Turns

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!!! note “Technique” This is a test of Admonitions

!!! warning “Common Issue” This is a test of Admonitions

!!! danger “Beware” This is a test of Admonitions

## Start:

* Blade buried
* Shoulders stacked
* Hip forwards.

## Do:

* Downward Pressure on top hand to keep blade buried
* Torque hips backwards to move paddle
* Recover forwards with feathered blade IN THE WATER

| # | Details |
| --- | --- |
| Start | Blade buried, Sholders stached and hips forwards |
| 1 | Downward Pressure on top hand to keep blade buried |
| 2 | Torque hips backwards to move paddle |
| 3 | Recover forwards with feathered blade just skimming the waters surface |
| Notes | Imagine that your bottom hand is tied to the hip that you are rotating backwards. This helps me keep my core strong instead of using my arm muscles |

<https://app.paddlemonster.com/view/m/a81c2c8c-25f5-44c9-b988-69f2ad9c4f4a/bulletins/9c9e5998-aef7-d3cf-c468-75e1a05e401b>

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# Cross Bow Rudder starting position

!!! note “Technique” Practice this from kneeling. Start with your paddle in normal paddling position on your LEFT side.

- Put your paddle in the water, at the nose of the board, as if you are going to do a sweep turn (A nice big semicircle from nose to tail of the board)  
- Without changing your grip or rotating the paddle blade, \*\*rotate your torso\*\* to the right until the paddle blade is now over the nose of your board  
- Imagine there is a big water melon there and you should be able to raise and drop the paddle blade to chop it in half.   
- Now imagine that you are pushing the water melon off the right side of the board and it falls into the water. (More torso rotation)  
- Rotate right a bit more, until you can now chop down into the water (to the right of your boards nose) and chop the melon some more. Make sure your blade is fully submerged.  
- Lift the blade out of the water and Rotate left until you can drop the blade back onto the left side of your boards nose.   
- Repeat this a dozen times and concentrate on minimising blade time in the air.

!!! warning “Common Issues” - Everyone tries to rotate the paddle the first time. - The key is to do NOTHING special with your hands. - Just lift the blade out of the water and rotate around until you can drop it back in on the other side of the board. - It is almost all torso rotation.

<https://app.paddlemonster.com/v2/m/a81c2c8c-25f5-44c9-b988-69f2ad9c4f4a/bulletins/7159413c-f175-dc79-44c4-d961ac4d2dbf>

### Start:

* Pontoon

### Do:

* Settle for Less Body Rotation than usual as you start to push the blade towards the water (Not max rotation)
* Then keep rotating as you push the paddle forwards into the water. (Spearing the fish)
* This stops catch slap (cavitation)

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### Start:

* On the water

### Do:

* Comfortable rotation (less hip rotation but do stack hands)
* Spear Tip into water (only the tip) as you rotate hips to full rotation.
* Lift the blade back out and reset to start

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## Start

* On land and then move to the water

## Do

* Use a pole to practice getting into your optimum pulling position.
* Thrust hips slightly forward
* Hinge upper body forward from hips whilst moving hips backwards and pulling on the pole
* Gently bend opposite knee (a little bit)

**insert picture here**

* Now move to the water.
* Rotate hips forward and hinge from the hips to **silently** spear the blade into the water.
* Kept burying the blade until about 6 inches of the shaft is also under water
* And rotate hips backwards whilst raising upper body back upright.
* Exit the water and let he board glide.

## Notes

* You will never really paddle this deep in real life but this extreme practice will make getting the blade buried a lot easier in normal use.
* You will also notice that getting the blade really deep is a worthy race start strategy
* Get the blade deep and **loaded** and then unload it and exit.
* Repeat :-)

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# Drill - Stop Go

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* [Cross Bow Rudder Starting Position](drills/drill_crossbow.md)
* [Stop Go - StepBack Turn Drill](drills/drill_stop_go.md)
* [Entry Drill on Land](drills/drill_entry.md)
* [Entry Drill on water](drills/drill_entry_water.md)
* [Loading Drill](drills/drill_loading.md)
* [Catch Drill](drills/drill_catch.md)
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* [Slalom Drill](drills/drill_slalom.md)
* [Steering: Inside the Circle](drills/drill_inside_circle.md)
* [Steering Tools](drills/drill_steering.md)
* [Drafting Step 1](drills/drafting.md)

# Endurance Checklist

## Hydration

* Hydration Pack (Waist or backpack)
* Water Bottles (Rigid or soft flasks)
  + 750ml to 500ml is a good size
  + Emergency rehydration bottle (Small bottle with premixed Diaralyte/Hydration Salts mix)
  + 5l Water Bottles to leave at checkpoints if the race does this for you
* WATER
* Energy Mix

## Safety Kit

* PFD
* Leash
* Waist-belt for Leash
  + Waist-belts has lots of benefits but the best one is that they can stay on whilst you portage
* A hat (Sun on the water can be brutal)
* Swimsuit or trunks
* Rash Vests
* Neoprene
  + Full wetsuit
  + Wetsuit separates (Trousers and Top)
  + Shoes/Boots
* Water Shoes / Sandals
* Waterproof socks
* Drysuit
  + Make sure it isn’t warm weather
* Gloves (Try several times before using in a race)
* Throwline
* TowLine
* Safety Knife
* ScrewDriver (That fits fin bolt)
* Phone
* Radio (Possibly)
* Spare Clothes (What you need to sit on a beach and wait for rescue)
* Survival Blanket or Bivvy (Reflective Sheet)
* Map
* Waterproof First Aid Kit
* Sunscreen
* Fin Bolt (Possibly even a spare fin)
* Dry Bags
* Bungy Cords to tie stuff to your board
* Insect Repellant
* GPS device
* What3Words on your phone
* Hand Gel (Rivers can have Weils disease etc… in the water
* Sunglasses

## Fuel

* Water
* Energy Mix (Drink)
* Gels or Fruit bars
* Energy Chew Bars
* Jam Sandwiches (It’s a must)
* Crisps

# Kit

# Goals

Think about your Goals in each of these areas over the next 3 months and then year.

* Fitness/Performance
* Competition
* Accomplishments
* Strengths to build upon

## Races

* You need a few types of racing goal

## Key goals

* These are the big races. The ones that really count.

# Mindset

* Nothing but net
* Optimists do better
* Challenge Yourself Daily, Weekly,Monthly
* Fear Inoculation (Gradual)
* Journalling (Again)
* Develop Self Confidence (Know thyself)

!!! note “Yoda Quote” - Do or do not. There is no try.

# Race Prep

## Goals

* You need a few types of goal
  + Key goals are the big races. The ones that really count.

## 3 months to go

* Register for the race. It is so easy to talk about a race but put opff entering until it is too late.
* Pros:
  + The date is set and you can tell everyone else that you are not free that weekend to help them move house etc…
  + It gives you a structure for your training plan
* Cons:
  + Now you can start with the worry and doubt
  + Your bank account is toast. You will start buying kit like crazy. (Maybe that should be a pro)
  + Your family will start to resent you and talk about “Quality Time” and what a fair share of chores looks like.

## 1 month to go

* Start to think about peaking and then tapering.
* Don’t overtrain. The hard work should all have been done by now

## 1 week to go

## 1 day to go

## Race Day

## The day after

# Planning the year

## Reality Check

* Just how much of the year is going to be focussed on racing?
* Do you still want to enjoy social paddling with friends who are not training?
* It is super easy to come up with a massive plan and burn out.
* Your family may also end up hating you. Remember that Friends and Family impact your plan as well.
* That said, it is critical to have some idea of where you want your year to go

!!! Warning “Budget Warning” - I have not mentioned credit cards yet BUT it is worth saying that Races, Kit and Travel can seriously impact your financial situation. - You need to financially evaluate your year plan. - You probably need “down time” just to pay off the credit card bills

## The Basics

* It helps if you know what, where and when.
* To do this you should fill out a Year Planner
* Have a think about your Goals, Races and Timescales and then what it will take to get there.
* Stick it in any kind of plan that works for you

### Templates

* [Year Planner Template](planning_yearplanner.md)
* [Year Planner Example](planning_yearplanner_mk.md)

!!! danger “Love Planning and not the Plan” - The Plan is great but doing the Planning is what really makes you think. - Don’t fall in love with the plan - Review it every month and see what needs changed

!!! note “Sharing is Commiting” - Stick the plan on the wall so that you see it every day - Share it with people. Talking about plans with others makes you more likely to stick to them - Make your Goals Public. If you are in a club then leaderboards etc… are a good motivator.

# Year Planner

!!! note “Technique Goals” List your Strengths that you want to build on

!!! note “Fitness Goals” Your fitness goals

!!! note “Timings” What you plan to do when

!!! note “Competitive Goals” What do you want to achieve during competitions this year

!!! danger “Key Races” The most important races of the year. Build your training plan around these races

!!! warning “PrepRaces” Races that will help you get fit and fast enough for your key races

!!! warning “Fun Races” Races that you are doing for fun

[Year Planner Example](planning_yearplanner_mk.md)

# Year Planner

!!! note “Technique Goals” - Increase Stroke Rate to 40 spm - Alter Stroke to stop killing my lower back - More rough water/sea paddling - More SUP Surfing

!!! note “Fitness Goals” - Lose weight - Strengthen my back - Improve strength

!!! note “Timings” - Jan: Aerobic Base Training - Feb: Aerobic Base Training - Mar: Strength and Speed Training - Apr - May: Strength and Speed Training - May: Strength and Speed Training - May: **Loch Awesome** - Jun: Recovery paddles after Loch Awesome - Jul: Base Distance Training for Trent 100 - Jul: **Trent100** - Jul: Recovery Paddles after Trent 100 - Aug: Strength and Speed training for Great Glen - Sep: Strength and Speed training for Great Glen - Sep: **Great Glen** - Oct: Recovery Paddles after Great Glen - Nov: Strength and Speed Training for Paris - Dec: **Paris :-)**

!!! note “Competitive Goals” - Finish at least mid pack in every race this year. - Finish Great Glen - Finish Great Glen under: 16 Hours - Finish Great Glen Day 1 under: 7 hours (42.5km) - Finish Great Glen Day 2 under: 9 hours (49.5km) - Finish Paris under: 1hr 11mins (1:24:58 is my best time so far)

!!! danger “Key Races” - The Great Glen - Paris

!!! warning “PrepRaces” - Loch Awesome - Trent 100 - Northern Sup Racing races

!!! warning “Fun Races” - Local 5k races

# Race Prep

!!! Info

- Your first race will be much better if you are prepared. This falls into a few big categories.  
- If you have not raced before, it is quite hard to know what you need to do before hand  
- Plan accordingly at set intervals before a race  
 - 3 months to go  
 - 1 week to go  
 - 1 day to go  
 - Race day  
 - Follow up

## 3 months to go

You have decided on a race that you want to do :

- You need to think about the training that is needed for that race.

* If it is an endurance race, are you ramping up your milage  slowly each week?
* If it is a sprint, are you doing more strength training and hitting the intervals? Now is the time to start.

You also need to consider:

* Do I have the right kit for the race
* Registering for the race
* Booking accommodation
* Booming Travel
* Booking time off work
* Getting someone to look after, pets, plants, children etc…

## 1 week to go

* Narrow down your top Self Talk phrases for next week and start to practice them. Get comfortable with them and what you want to think when you say them to yourself.
* Cut Toe and Finger nails (If you over trim then there is a week for them to heal)
* Shave anything that you are going to shave now.
* Check over your kit for any maintenance needed (Especially if using an adjustable paddle)
* Rinse out adjustable paddle to get any salt or sand out. These are the things that will make it jam on race day
* Make sure your leash and leash string are nice and strong. Leash strings breaking will ruin any choppy water race.
* Make sure that you have all Food/Fuelling supplies in place for next week.
* Make sure that you are Tapering properly and not doing too much
  + It is as important to have mental rest as physical.

## The day before the race

* RELAX :-)
* Get your checklist and make sure that you have everything packed
* Mix up any Fuel Drinks and fill water bladders and bottles
* Pack the car if you are travelling or at least put everything at the Front Door if you are getting picked up
* DO NOT DRINK COFFEE AFTER 6PM. It will be hard enough to sleep as it is
* Sand, but don’t cut toe nails and finger nails
* Rehearse your race strategy
* Rehearse your Self Talk

# Skills and Drills

* **Skills** are things you need to learn how to do to be a better racer
* **Drills** are how you learn those Skills

## Skills

* [Paddling Styles](skills_paddle_styles.md)
* [Buoys](skills_buoys.md)
* [Race Starts](skills_starts.md)
* [Paddle Skills](skills_paddleskills.md)
* [Drafting 101](drafting101.md)

## Drills

* [Cross Bow Rudder Starting Position](drill_crossbow.md)
* [Stop Go - StepBack Turn Drill](drill_stop_go.md)
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# Buoys

## What stroke to use

* Cross Bow Rudder (Backside Turn)
* Step Back Buoy Turn
* Classic Rudder

## Nothing but Carbon

## Stab the water and fall straight in

## Approaching the buoy

## Turning into wind

## Turning downwind

## Turning across wind

## Paddling Styles

SO should I use:

* Hawaiian
* Tahitian
* Tensegrity
* Or copy what the latest pro’s are using.

The only definite answer here is that paddling like the Pro’s will probably destroy your back or shoulders.

By the time you can paddle like them, you won’t need a book anymore. (Can I get a discount on your race clinics?)

| # | Diagram | Notes |
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# Race Starts

So there are a couple of Race Start types.

1. Competitive lines up and sprint from the whistle
2. Competitive staggered start
3. Competitive Wave Start
4. Relaxed fun event start

Most of them have the common factor that the water around you will turn into a washing machine the minute the race starts.

## Strategies for dealing with rough water at a race start:

1. Get ahead of the pack and you are in clear water (as if everyone else is not trying the same thing. If you are racing on a narrow river or canal then the waves will rebound off of the sides. It IS really worth spending)
2. Hang back and wait until everyone zooms off and it calms down (Only really viable in fun races or very long distance where the 30 seconds lost at the start means less)
3. Practice on the sea in rough weather and get used to bumpy conditions
4. Practice race starts at your local club and just get used to them
5. Have a very clear idea of where you want to go. (Often at starts the pack just follows the first person out and takes a less optimal path. This is more obvious on larger bodies of water)
6. **Paddle Paddle Paddle**. If your blade is in the water then you are more stable. Get low and paddle with short sharp stokes. Recover quickly as you can so that the paddle spends the least time out of the water.

| # | Diagram | Notes |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  | Line up straight |
| 2 |  | Line up pointing towards your paddle side |
| 3 |  | Get to the upwind side of the pack |
| 4 |  | Line up for shortest route to first turn |
| 5 |  | Line up for inside line at first turn |

# The races early stage

* After the **Start** has happened you need to calm down and settle into your groove.
* Adopt your expected race pace. You are probably going too fast, after the excitement of the start.
* Start to think strategically.
  + What are other people doing?
  + What is the weather doing?
  + What is the best course option?
  + Are you in the right situation to implement your Race Plan?
* Try to settle your breathing into a rhythm
* Start to think about timing points. Lay out in your head the next few turns/markers and what times you should be hitting them.

# Race Finish

## Note:

* **Be absolutely clear what you intend to do at the race finish before you even start the race**.
* By the end of the race, your decision making prowess is at it’s worst.
* Think through a few strategies and compare them to your Goals.
  + If you are happy to finish a big fun-run race in 50th place , then why pull a muscle sprinting to finish 49th
  + If you are hoping to Podium on your years Target Race then start rehearsing what to do if you are a close 4th, with 500m to go.
  + Are you going to Sprint for the finish?
  + Are you going to cruise over the finish line (and know where the cameras are). Turn towards the cameras and smile :-)
  + Are you going to try and finish with a strong steady stroke (hiding the fact that you are totally knackered)
  + Are you going to wait for your friends/team/family and cross the line with them (This is the most likely situation where friendships are tested)

## Strategies

* **Improve your technique**. Your technique is probably sub-optimal by now. Pick a distance where you will consciously improve your technique and start to paddle efficiently.
* **Start concentrating on breathing**. Time your breathing to paddle strokes as you works best for you.
* **Concentrate on BREATHING OUT**. Most people take very shallow breaths when they sprint. Breathing in happen Automatically after you breath out. The opposite is not true.
* **Visualise what you want to happen**. Cruise, Sprint, Look great or hang out with friends etc…
* **And remember to breath**. I know this is a repeat but if you do one thing, then make it breathing.

# The races middle (Endurance Races)

* It’s time to stop thinking about being tired or in pain
* Get the music on or start mental exercises
  + Practicing the Phonetic Alphabet for the VHF exam is a good one.
  + Try to say phrases in foreign languages
  + Any Meditation techniques that you practice
* The key thing is to distract yourself.
  + Many aches and pains will fade away after a period of ignoring it
* Start to Hydrate (0.75 Litres of water per hour is a good start)
* You also need to Fuel (Eat, Gels or Water based mixtures)

## Pros

* This is a great time to spend 4 hours thinking about something important in your life

## Dealing with pain

Different people use varying strategies to cope with pain

* The one that works for me is compartmentalisation but it took me years to work out how to do it.
* The idea is that when pain strikes, you imagine putting it in a box, and locking that box away in a mental cupboard until later. That really did not work for me no matter how hard I tried.
* The breakthrough for me was watching Catherine Destivelle free climbing a massive cliff in North Africa. No ropes and certain death if she fell. At one point her foot slips off the rock. Instead of flinching, and probably falling to her death, she just pauses, and gives her foot the most scathing and disapproving look you could ever imagine. She puts her foot back on the rock and climbs on to the top.
* She compartmentalised her actual body part. She treated her foot like a Naughty Child and scolded it. (This is not a good parenting treatise).
* When I started to treat sore parts of my body, with complete disdain and disappointment, the emotion involved started to do the trick.
* I am pretty sure the trick is finding a way to engage emotion on your side against the pain. (A therapist might say I’m just nuts and a terrible parent though…)

**Summary of this technique**:

* Fight the emotion of pain with the disdain you would give a small child, that has done something really bad to your favourite carpet. (If you have hardwood floors then imagine deep scratches)
* Don’t scream. Accept it and try to swallow the crushing disappointment and the pain may just go away.
* Stay Calm and Keep Paddling ( I got that from a poster)

!!! note - You may find yourself spending 4 hours obsessing about the state of your hardwood floors.

# Going in a straight line

There are a few fundamentals to paddling in a straight line

!!! Info “There are a few fundamentals to paddling in a straight line”

- Pull the paddle in a straight line and do not follow the curve of the boards rail  
- Place the paddle vertically into the water (as seen when looking from in front or behind the board)  
- Try and get the wide part of the blade under the boards rail  
- In crosswinds place the blade into teh water a few inches further away from teh board than usual and angle it back towards you feet  
- Get the blade out of the water at your feet or very soon after

## Pull the paddle in a straight line

## Place the paddle vertically

## Wide part of the blade under the board

## Angle paddle stroke towards you feet

## Blade out of the water quicker

# What skills does a SUP racer need

!!! Info “The super quick answer”

- Paddle in a straight line  
- Paddle fast  
- Paddle in rough water (handy at race starts)  
- Turn quickly  
- Sprint (Useful in lots of situations)  
- Paddle efficiently over longer distances  
- Paddle in Draft Trains  
- Plan courses (wind, tide, competitive advantage ...)  
- Evaluate Safety (wind, tide, wtaer conditions, hazards, support ...)  
- Train effectively  
- Pick the right kit for each race  
- Fuel and Hydrate effectively  
- Beach Starts

The more nuanced answer is all of these plus a lot of more “Niche Skills”

It is also important to know when each skill may come in useful. We will go into each in depth, but lets take Sprinting as an example, of why it is worth reading through each of them, even if you never intend to do a sprint race.

Sprinting is useful when:

* Starting a race and trying to get ahead of the pack
* Dropping people who are drafting in behind you (Gapping)
* Catching someone who has just passed you so that you can jump onto their tail and draft them
* Sprint finishes to races to beat your non-sprinty competitors
* Paddling into heavy wind (this uses most of the same skillsets and muscles as sprinting)
* Going to get help in the event of an accident (Sometimes you just have to get their faster)
* and lots of other times.

So from this list you can see that Ultra Endurance paddlers still need to be able to Sprint at least a bit.