

## Finding the right kayak paddle is not that hard...

You simply need to determine the type of paddling you want to do whether it's flat-water kayaking to explore lakes, slowing moving rivers, bayous, bays, gulfs, and the ocean or whitewater kayaking down fast moving whitewater river rapids. Then once you figured your type of paddling, you simply select a kayak paddle that fits your budget.

For this article we are only going to be looking at the option of flat-water style kayaks .

### Flat-water Kayaking Kayak Paddles:

Flat-water Kayak Paddles feature advanced blade designs that create a smooth and stable stroke to propel your kayak across the lake, ocean, or river. Many have the new [Adjustable Ferrule Systems](#) that allow you to adjust both the length and the [feather angle](#) of the blades. This feature makes sizing a piece of cake. These kayak paddles are made of either fiberglass or carbon fiber. We highly recommend carbon fiber paddles. Carbon is lighter weight but still achieves a high level of performance, durability and strength. When choosing paddle the price can appear to be directly related to the [material](#) it is made of, what we must do is take into consideration the options or advantages/disadvantages of each. Most of the high end paddles have incorporated efficiency, weight, durability, and strength into the design of the shaft and blade. For this reason we strongly recommend you try before you buy. Many dealers have “DEMO DAYS” to promote their products; we encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities!

## More Things to Consider When Choosing A Kayak Paddle

### Important Buying Advice:

Although you can buy a cheap kayak paddle for less than \$100, we highly recommend investing in a good quality, lightweight paddle. The kayak paddle is one of the most important pieces of equipment. It is what you'll use to move your boat from point A to point B, unless your kayak is designed with another method of propulsion like the “Hobie” brand kayaks that offer a mirage drive system. Then the paddle takes on a secondary role. With this in mind a [backup paddle](#) may be something you would want to consider,

- **Sizing:** Once you narrow down your selection to a specific kayak paddle, simply click on the sizing chart on the product page to determine the correct length. In general, if you paddle a flat-water kayak you will need a longer paddle, usually between 220cm-230cm long. A longer kayak paddle gives more leverage in flat-water and allows the paddle to effectively reach the water, but it is usually unwieldy when trying to maneuver technical

whitewater. Therefore whitewater kayak paddles are generally shorter than flat-water paddles and are sized by the person's height. They are usually between 191cm-197cm.

Unfortunately, manufacturers size paddles measuring from blade tip to blade tip. This wouldn't be a problem if all blades were the same lengths. Imagine this: Two shafts, the same length. Place a pair of long blades on one shaft, a pair of short blades on the other. This will produce two paddles of different lengths, but the same shaft fitting the same person.

• **Blade shape:** Kayak paddle blades can be long, short, narrow, wide, as well as symmetrical or asymmetrical. Each shape has its benefits. A wide blade with a larger blade surface can provide greater acceleration, but will also create more resistance in the water. It takes more effort to use a large-bladed paddle than a smaller one. This can be an important factor as flat-water kayaking is more about endurance than it is about speed. A long, narrow kayak blade will take more strokes to move through the same amount of water, but the paddler will be less tired while doing it.

## ADJUSTABLE FERRULE SYSTEM

With a fully Adjustable Ferrule System you are able to modify your paddle for any situation. You can adjust the shaft length to accommodate different paddlers' heights or paddle styles. You are also able to adjust the blade's offset to address different weather conditions. This allows for the ultimate control in custom paddle performance.



## FEATHER ANGLE

Paddle blades that are not feathered have the blades parallel to one another. Feathered paddles have the blades turned at an angle to one another. This feathering allows for a more efficient stroke as the blade that is not in the water is leading into the wind with its narrow edge instead of the flat side, making for much less wind resistance (physics is cool). Some paddlers, especially beginners, find that the additional wrist-turning necessary to use a feathered paddle is uncomfortable and unnatural. A possible good compromise for the beginning paddler is a collapsible paddle that can be adjusted for either feathered or non-feathered use. All of our paddles with Adjustable Ferrules do just that!

# SYMMETRICAL OR ASYMMETRICAL

Paddle blades can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. Typically, flat-water paddles are long, narrow and symmetrical. Some paddlers find an asymmetrical paddle reduces the twisting on the paddle shaft while stroking, because it evens the amount of water on each side of the submerged paddle.

## Materials

It goes without saying that the lighter the weight, the easier the paddling. However, the best paddles offer a balanced combination of light weight and strength. Whitewater paddles are expected to hold up to a vigorous workout, and strength is a big consideration. Touring paddles, on the other hand, won't be subject to the same strains, so weight becomes more important, especially on long trips.

### Wood

Wood transmits the feel of the water well, helping achieve a smooth stroke. It retains warmth to keep hands comfortable in cold conditions. Some upkeep is required to maintain its appearance. Many wood paddles are covered with a layer of fiberglass and/or have a tip guard to improve durability.

### Fiberglass

These paddles are lightweight, durable and virtually maintenance-free. The nature of fiberglass allows for more complex blade shapes. In the middle of the price range, these are by far the most popular choice for whitewater and sea kayaking alike.

### Carbon Fiber

Carbon fiber paddles are among the lightest available. The high-tech material and manufacturing process produces durable paddles with extremely light weights. They cost more, but are worth it if weight is a concern, such as when you expect to be paddling long hours or on multi-day trips. Carbon fiber is slightly less durable than fiberglass.

### Aluminum/Plastic

Paddles with aluminum shafts and plastic blades are durable and economical, but heavier than paddles made from other materials. Also, aluminum can feel cold in cool weather. They make great spare paddles, and can be a good choice for beginners or recreational kayakers. Blades are made from a variety of plastics, including polyethylene, polypropylene, thermoplastic and ABS.

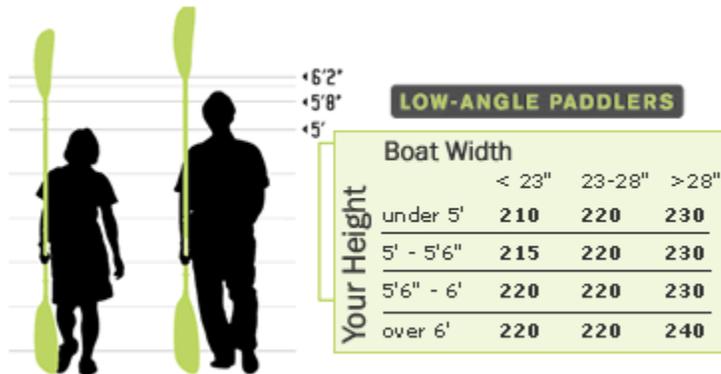
# BACKUP PADDLES

## Backup Paddles:

Backup paddles like this can be purchase at most Bass-Pro shops or Wal-Mart stores , they are telescoping emergency paddles that are easily stored until needed.



## Guide to flat-water kayak paddle sizes



## Guide to white –water paddles sizes



PLAYBOATERS	
PADDLER HEIGHT	LENGTH
5'2" – 5'8"	191 cm
5'8" – 6'1"	194 cm
over 6'	197 cm

RIVER RUNNING BOATERS	
PADDLER HEIGHT	LENGTH
4'8" – 5'2"	191 cm
5'2" – 5'8"	194 cm
5'8" – 6'1"	197 cm
6'1"	200 cm

## STRAIGHT AND NEUTRAL BENT SHAFT

### Straight Shaft Carbon

- More traditional feeling and generally less expensive.
- The lightest weight option available.
- Continuous length allows for easy hand movement.



### Neutral Bent Shaft Carbon

- Neutral bent shafts naturally aligns wrists to reduce fatigue
- More hand to shaft contact for increased control
- Immediate comfort and reduced strain with lighter grip
- Extremely light weight with Werner durability
- Balanced for precise control and comfort



Information compiled from the following sources:

<http://www.outdoorplay.com/Kayak-Paddles-Kayaking-Paddle>

<http://www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/kayak+paddle.html>