

## Find Your Bliss With These Stand Up Paddle Boarding Tips

By Samantha Durbin

Are you ready to dive into summer? Or maybe you prefer just being sea misted? Either way, if you're craving a fun, sometimes challenging, water sport, consider stand up paddle boarding (SUP for short). Popularized by big wave surfer Laird Hamilton, the handful of times I've paddle boarded, worries seemed to blow away behind me as I focused ahead, balancing and enjoying the ride, while working my arms, core, legs—every body part. Even my feet! Which grounded me on a board atop the water, instead of my usual yoga mat or kickboxing floor.

If you're hesitant, Lisa Johnson, paddle board instructor at Marina Paddle in Marina del Rey, has some beginner tips to motivate you to try SUP this summer. Lisa has been paddle boarding for eight years and did diving and crew (rowing) throughout high school. She's a definitive water baby. For her SUP "Feels like a form of yoga with the tranquility of the water and being present in your mind with full body control and balance. It's like walking on water. It's peaceful and strengthening for your mind, body, and soul."

Not quite a water baby yourself? Here are Lisa's tips to get you revved up for SUP.

*What areas of the body does SUP strengthen and tone?*

"It's not rough on your body like running or lifting weights. It's perfect for toning your entire body as paddle boarding is a full-body workout, from arms to shoulders to your core, legs, and rear. I usually find myself holding in my abs while paddling and not even realizing I'm working my core. Strong abs help with balance. Clenching your rear also helps keep you steady. Your body will naturally flex to keep yourself upright, which is another reason SUP is a naturally strengthening exercise."

*What are your balancing tricks?*

"Balancing usually takes a few minutes to get and paddle boarding is an easy exercise to learn, but the hardest part is getting the balance down. The boards are big and more like a raft and way more stable than smaller boards. It's best to start paddling on your knees until you feel comfortable standing. Once you're standing, just keep looking forward with a wide stance for better balance. If you're on flat water, most people won't fall off the board once their balance is right. If you find yourself wobbling because of a wave or distraction, a simple way to save yourself from falling into the water is to get on your knees and work

your way back up to standing. Cruising on your knees is just as relaxing and a killer thigh workout."

*What complimentary workouts can help with SUP balance or strengthening?*

"Switching between yoga, Pilates, rowing, and SUP is an awesome combo if you want to improve your overall balance and strengthen and tone. The great thing about paddle boarding is you can make it leisure fun or a great workout. If you want to amp up the workout, try a more challenging paddle fit class or a SUP yoga class—don't be intimidated, take the plunge, hybrid SUP classes are super fun!"

*What are the ideal workout pieces for SUP?*

"You can wear anything from a bikini to workout clothing—it all depends on the weather and what you're comfortable in. Shorts in quick drying fabrics like these [Do Everything Bermuda Shorts](#) are smart. I love wearing stylish sports bras that can double as a swimsuit top, like this [Powerfully Poised Bra](#). A hat, sunglasses, and waterproof sunscreen are musts to protect from the sun (even when it's overcast). Harmful rays reflect off the water so the higher the SPF the better for longer-lasting protection."

*What are some good energy foods to eat before going out on the board?*

"It's ideal to eat a little something before you go out, but not too heavy of a meal—save the cheeseburger for later when you're zen from gliding on the water. Nuts or fruit are quick energy sources. Also, hydration. You can usually take a water bottle out with you (we fasten them with bungee cords on the front of the boards)."

*One last SUP tip?*

"If you fall in the water it's no big deal! It can be really refreshing, and if you get hot it's the best way to cool down."