

The only way is SUP!

It may not surprise you to learn that 'modern' Stand Up Paddleboarding has its roots in Hawaii and became known as a sport in 1939 but has actually been around for thousands of years ([click here for more on the history](#)).

If you are looking to try what many still view as an alternative water sport and don't want to outlay hundreds of pounds on equipment I recommend a visit to [Wesup](#) in Torquay where you will receive a most amazing welcome, instruction and tours of the coastline, if you so choose.

Although stability of SUP boards is paramount and related to the dimensions of SUP you use (contact Wesup for advice) having the correct conditioning for paddle boarding will enhance your experience; allowing you to enjoy our natural environment for longer, and more importantly, without any subsequent injuries!



POSTURE PROVIDES POWER OR ENDURANCE

There is no evidence base that can categorically state that any injury (on land or sea) is as a direct result of posture. A phrase I often use in clinic with my clients is "there is no one, perfect 'posture'...your next posture is your best posture"! This has its benefits and drawbacks.

Due to the currents in the water and the effect of the wind and propulsion of the rider?? The standing position is not static, it is dynamic with small (and maybe not so small) muscular adjustments to counteract the forces being placed on the SUP and it's captain?? in order to maintain balance and a position of stability to paddle against. If you are wondering how you train for balance...you have to test your balance regularly. Receptors in the muscles (called proprioceptors) allow us to know where we are in time and space. By having higher demands of them, they will become more responsive and be able to adjust to changes quicker over time. There are 2 life examples that illustrate this; when you learnt to walk (having first gained the necessary strength to do so) and riding a bike!



At the same time continual contraction (of the hamstrings for example) due to the worry of falling off, will lead to fatigue, an inability to maintain the position comfortably and therefore effecting the riders experience as well as their efficiency.

If the body is comfortable but assured, it can prevent unwanted torque (twisting forces) transferred from the shoulders down through the body which may become referred pain in the lower back or knees). This would allow for more powerful strokes, due to the position adopted, or allow for a longer paddle as the muscles are not overly active, leading to them becoming tired quicker.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

As you are likely to be out on the water for over 20 minutes, this activity would be categorised as Aerobic (using oxygen to create energy to fuel our muscle contractions). As oxygen is transported in the blood, we need a strong heart to pump that blood to the working muscles. Like any other muscle in the body, the heart can develop (increase thickness of muscle fibres and hence increase its overall size) to push more blood around the body in each heart beat and to push it more powerfully, so it arrives at the muscles to offload the oxygen quicker. This increase in efficiency means you are less likely to have that 'heavy leg' feeling or muscles that just won't respond and may even start cramping up.

As with any training programme, progression requires slightly more challenge- but only when the body can do what is asked of it without injury (DOMS is fine!). For those of you thinking of dipping your toe (or paddle) into this sport check out this [SUP fitness](#) article which will take you through each element: Cardio-Vascular, core strength and leg strength, with progressions depending on your ability and experience.

TRANSLATING TRAINING: FOUNDATION FIRST, THEN FUNCTION!

Whilst it is important to be aware of the demands that will be placed on your body, the training ideas are important if you wish to progress from bobbing around on the water to using it as a workout. Land activities for conditioning will help immensely but you also need to train on the water- training for function (SUP).

To avoid injury training functional movement is vitally important. For example to help strengthen your legs and challenge your balance at home (and on dry land) use a couple of old cushions and put a plank of wood or old tray on them...then try to single leg squat! This is much more realistic can be the progression once the initial conditioning phase has been achieved.

