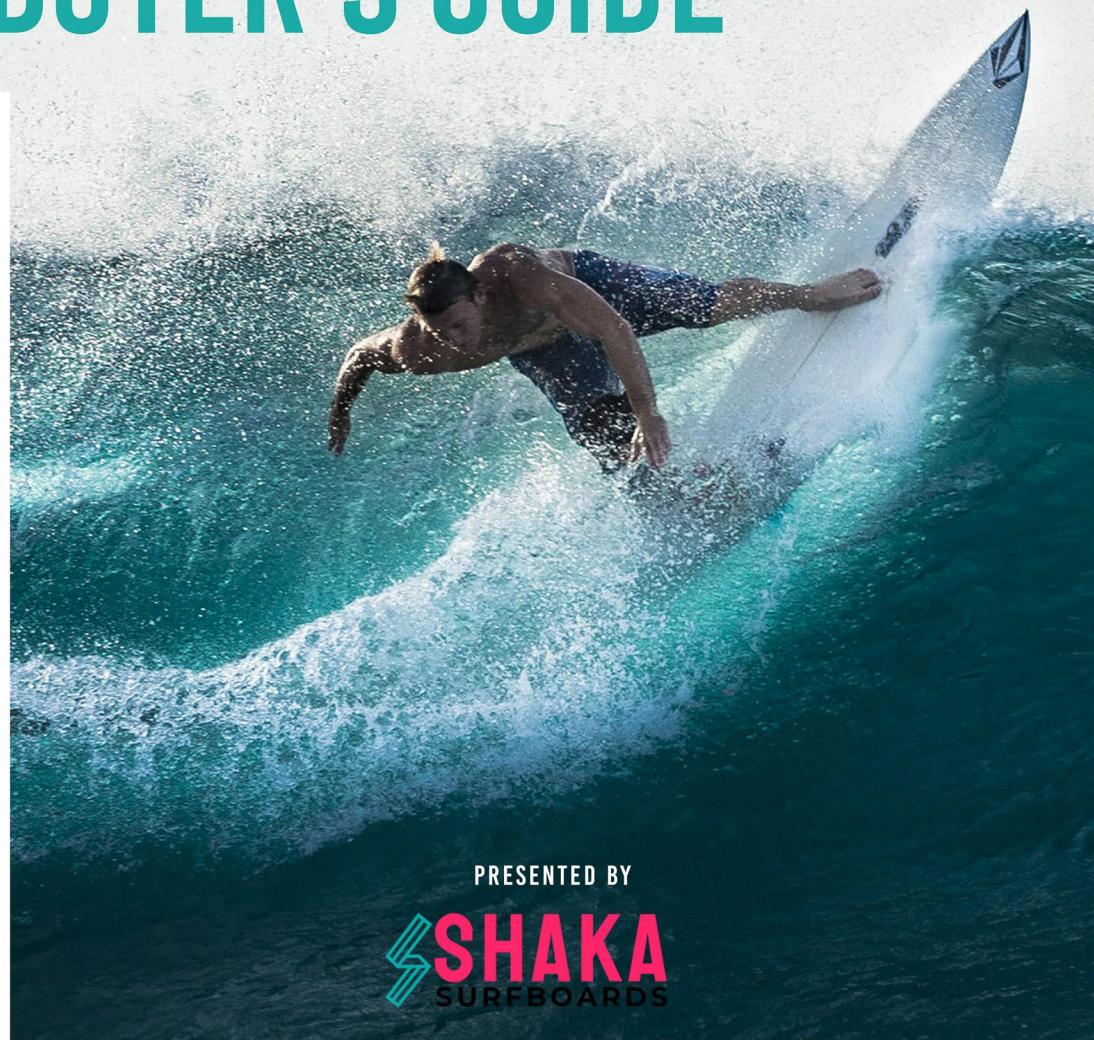


# THE COMPLETE SURF BOARD BUYER'S GUIDE



PRESENTED BY

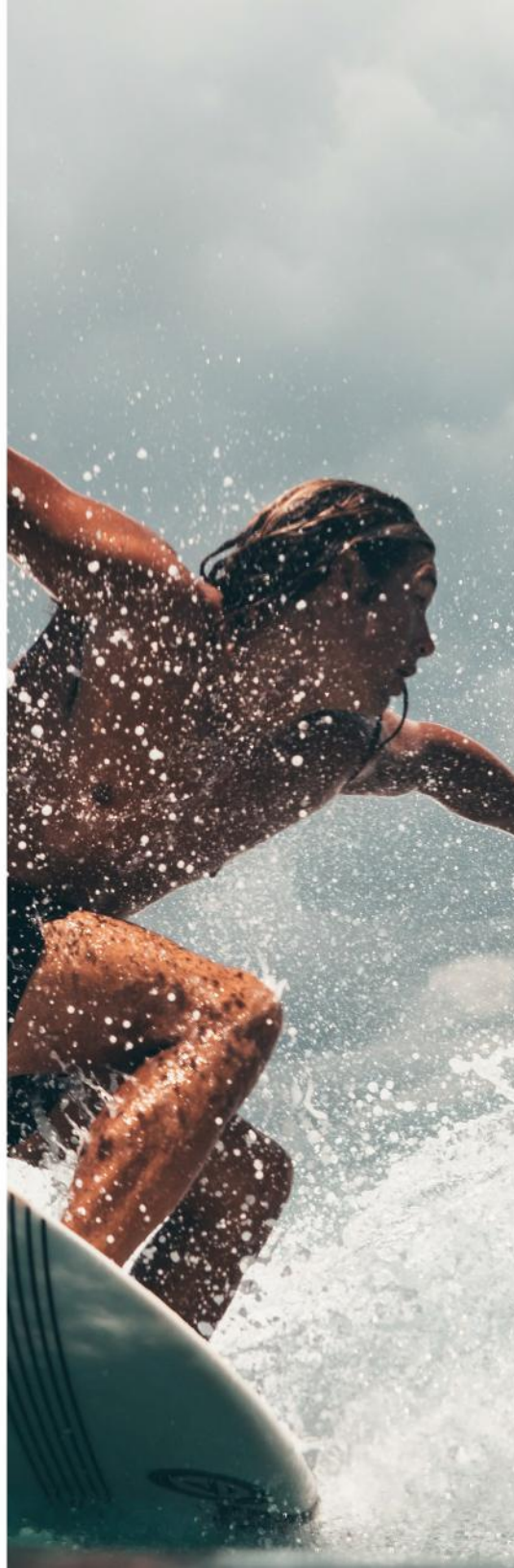
 **SHAKA**  
SURFBOARDS

# THE COMPLETE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR SURFBOARDS

PRESENTED BY:  
SHAKA SURFBOARDS

If you need some guidance in choosing the ideal surfboard for you, you're in the right place. It doesn't matter if you have experience in surfing or you're a complete beginner - we'll make the whole process easier for you!

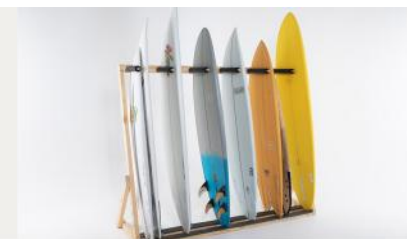
In this guide, we'll discuss the different factors to consider, the different types of surfboards there are, and how to choose the right one.



## FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SURFBOARD

### Practicality

Think about how you'll transport and store your board and kit. You need to ensure that you have a place you can safely store your board.



### Progression

Choose a board that can help you improve your skill and confidence. But if you're planning to surf a lot less often, choose a surfboard that provides more fun whenever you're surfing.

### Durability

This is one of the key factors when choosing. Buy a durable board that can keep your board away from any damage when you hit things or if you fall on it.



### Maneuverability

Get a board that gives you a lot of maneuverability according to your preferences. Consider the ease of moving the board when in and out of the water.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF SURFBOARDS

Let's start with the basics. There are different types of surfboards for different surfing abilities. This means that the ideal surfboard for an experienced surfer wouldn't be ideal for a beginner.

## FOAM SURFBOARDS/FOAMIES

These are soft-top surfboards with foam as the core is covered with synthetic wraps. The soft top makes it more comfortable to paddle and safer to fall on. Foam boards are generally used by surf schools for new surfers so it's ideal for beginners.

- |               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Pros:</b>  | <b>Cons:</b>               |
| - Stable      | - One of the biggest types |
| - Buoyant     |                            |
| - Lightweight |                            |
| - Durable     |                            |



## MINI MALIS

This is a smaller version of a longboard or a Malibu surfboard. A mini mal often has a lot of volume that provides the surfboard paddling power, stability, and wave catching. They're also maneuverable due to their short length. Beginners usually move into this after using foamies.

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Pros:</b>                              | <b>Cons:</b>      |
| - Super buoyant                           | - Quite expensive |
| - Lightweight                             | - Can be bulky    |
| - Popular in the second-hand market       |                   |
| - More maneuverable than a foam surfboard |                   |

## LONGBOARDS

These surfboards are one of the most traditional and oldest boards used in surfing. They usually range from 8 ft to 12 ft and are the longest type of surfboard. With more volume than a mini mal, a longboard is perfect for surfers who are improving their surfing abilities.

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Pros:</b>                      | <b>Cons:</b>   |
| - Stable                          | - Difficult to transport and store due to its length |
| - Easy paddling                   | - Heavy  |
| - Easiest board to perform tricks | - Can be difficult to maneuver                       |
| - Can be used with another person |  |

## FUNBOARDS/HYBRID

The size of this surfboard type falls between a Mini Mal and a Shortboard. Because of this, there's enough buoyancy to catch lots of waves and still be able to maneuver. Compared to a Mini Mal, funboards have pointier noses.

It's an ideal board to use in a wide range of waves so it's perfect for surfers trying different wave conditions.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Pros:</b>                                      | <b>Cons:</b>                                      |
| - Allow easy transition for beginners             | - The hard board can hurt the surfer when falling |
| - Easy to transport and carry                     | - Can be more expensive due to the versatility    |
| - Can catch any wave                              |   |
| - Can be duck dived                               |   |
| - More maneuverable than a longboard and mini mal |   |

## SHORTBOARDS

This is the shortest traditional surfboard type and is known as the high-performance surfboard. Compared to larger boards, shortboards provide good maneuverability and can be used to perform extremely agile moves.

A shortboard is ideal for experienced surfers who have more solid forms and balances in riding.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Pros:</b>                               | <b>Cons:</b>                           |
| - Super lightweight                        | - Harder to ride                       |
| - Easiest to carry                         | - Difficult to get speed when paddling |
| - Extremely durable                        | - Requires solid techniques in riding  |
| - Fastest and most responsive type         |  |
| - Good for steep drop-ins and hollow waves |  |

## FISH SURFBOARDS

These are thicker and wider than traditional surfboards. It's designed to handle challenging waves like a shortboard with the ease of paddling like a longboard or funboard. A fish can also be used on days when extra paddle strength is needed.

Many fishes have swallowtails that's why they are also called "swallowtail" boards. These tails are good for higher-speed surfing but lessen the maneuverability of the board.

- |                                  |                     |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Pros:</b>                     | <b>Cons:</b>        |
| - Lightweight                    | - Less buoyant      |
| - Easy to carry                  | - Tails are fragile |
| - Agile                          |                     |
| - Have good amounts of stability |                     |
| - Good for mushy conditions      |                     |

## GUN SURFBOARDS

The last one on the list is the type that most surfers won't need unless you want to challenge big waves. Gun surfboards are mainly designed for monster waves. A gun has similar features to a shortboard but is longer. It's more commonly found in places like Hawaii where there are lots of big waves to surf.

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Pros:</b>                              | <b>Cons:</b>                          |
| - Can be used to outrun the biggest waves | - Designed for big waves only         |
| - Most ideal to be used in survival       | - Same size or bigger than longboards |
| - Durable                                 | - Not suitable for beginners          |

# HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SURFBOARD

## 1. DETERMINE SURFING ABILITY/LEVEL

The first thing to do is to determine your abilities. You need to match your surfboard to your abilities. Don't overcompensate and think highly of your skills. The performance of a surfboard depends on many factors and your surfing ability affects a lot of these.

The performance we're talking about is the board's ability to do maneuvers, smooth transitions, and maintain speed. That's why it's crucial to use a board designed for your level of surfing. It will only be a waste if you buy a board you'll struggle with.



There are three main surfing abilities:

### LEVEL 1: BEGINNER

This encompasses those who are completely new to surfing and those with little experience. Higher-volume surfboards are ideal for these surfers. The high volume gives you enough stability which makes it easier for you to take off and paddle.

As beginners, you'll usually start on the shore, learning the proper pop-up and correct posture on the surfboard when riding a wave. After that, you will move on the waves near the shore, the white foamy water, and practice there.

Some of the most appropriate surfing boards for beginners include foam surfboards and mini mals.

### LEVEL 2: INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate surfers practice paddling on the green, unbroken waves. These surfers can already take off cleanly and will learn to paddle on these waves. If you're an intermediate surfer, you will also start to catch the waves before they break.

In the intermediate level, you will learn how to paddle in various ways, maneuvering, choosing and catching continuous waves, positioning yourself on the peak, and understanding the 'surf code.'

To help intermediate surfers improve their skills, you will need surfboards that are playful and agile on the water. This can include funboards, longboards, and fish surfboards.

### LEVEL 3: PRO/ADVANCED

This is the expert level for experienced surfers who have the boards under their control. These surfers are comfortable on any wave and have no problem with cutbacks, duck dives, and top-to-bottom turns.

At this level, you will be practicing getting your own style in surfing. For intermediate surfers, some ideal boards include fish surfboards and shortboards.

If you want more adventure, like catching bigger waves, you can get a gun surfboard.



## 2. MEASURE SURFBOARD SIZE

Next, you have to determine the right size of surfboard for you. Surfboard sizes are in feet and inches. The dimensions are critical to a surfer's progression, especially if you're a beginner. Here are the dimensions you need to look out for:

### LENGTH

The length of a surfboard is the distance between the nose and the tail of the board. It's usually dictated by the design and is based on your height. Choose a length depending on your height. It's best to keep it about 1'0" to 1'5" taller than you. However, depending on your surfing skills, you can get a board of any length that's suitable for you.

### WIDTH

The width keeps the board in proportion. Added width gives surfboards more planning surface and float, making them more stable. This makes it easier to ride and stand. For newer surfers, the wider the board the better. Added width will also make the surfboard 'glide' better over flat spots in the waves.

### THICKNESS

This dimension affects the buoyancy of the surfboard but is often overlooked. The thicker it is, the more buoyant it is and will be easier to paddle. Thickness is also affected by the surfer's weight so make sure to consider yours. Generally, a smaller surfer would go for about 2" to 2.5" thick while larger surfers would choose about 3" thick.



### IF YOU'RE SURFING AT MOST 2 DAYS PER WEEK:

Surfer's Weight	Surfboard Length	Surfboard Width	Surfboard Thickness
100 - 140 lbs 45.4 - 63.5 kg	6'2" - 6'4"	18.75" - 19.25"	2.25" - 2.9"
140 - 160 lbs 63.5 - 72.6 kg	6'4" - 6'8"	19" - 20"	2.9" - 2.5"
160 - 180 lbs 72.6 - 81.6 kg	6'6" - 6'10"	19.5" - 20.5"	2.5" - 3.1"
180 - 200 lbs 81.6 - 90.7 kg	6'10" - 7'4"	20" - 21.5"	2.75" - 3"
200+ lbs 90.7+ kg	7'4" +	21.5" - 22.5"	3" - 3.25"

### IF YOU'RE SURFING MORE THAN 2 DAYS PER WEEK:

Surfer's Weight	Surfboard Length	Surfboard Width	Surfboard Thickness
100 - 140 lbs 45.4 - 63.5 kg	6'0" - 6'4"	18.5" - 19"	2.25" - 2.9"
140 - 160 lbs 63.5 - 72.6 kg	6'2" - 6'6"	18.75" - 19.25"	2.9" - 2.5"
160 - 180 lbs 72.6 - 81.6 kg	6'4" - 6'8"	19" - 19.75"	2.5" - 3.1"
180 - 200 lbs 81.6 - 90.7 kg	6'6" - 7'2"	19.5" - 20.5"	2.75" - 3"
200+ lbs 90.7+ kg	7'2" +	20" - 21.5"	3" - 3.25"

FOR A MORE ACCURATE SIZING GUIDE, CALCULATE THE IDEAL VOLUME WITH THE NEXT STEP.

### 3. CALCULATE IDEAL SURFBOARD VOLUME

The ideal volume is unique to every surfer and is one of the most important things to consider in choosing the right surfboard. The surfboard must provide enough buoyancy for surfers to paddle comfortably, launch waves, and land safely on the board during takeoff.

For beginners, the more volume, the better. High-volume boards are more stable and make paddling easier. As your skills improve, you can start trying less volume boards.

Volume is the calculation of a board's area in liters and is shown by the length, width, and height of boards. Before considering other factors like size and fins, you need to know your desired volume.

#### LOW-VOLUME SURFBOARDS:

This means that the board's volume is lower than the suggested volume for your weight and height. These boards are recommended for more experienced surfers with great skill levels. Low-volume boards are sensitive to the surfer's movements, and beginners are still learning how to properly ride boards. If beginners use these boards, they can get hurt and obtain injuries.

#### HIGH-VOLUME SURFBOARDS:

This means that the board's volume is higher than the suggested volume for you. These offer great weight support for surfers which makes them ideal for beginners.

To know your personal suggested volume, you need to consider your weight, surfing abilities, and fitness level.



Follow these steps to roughly do so:

#### • GET THE VOLUME BASED ON YOUR WEIGHT AND SKILL LEVEL

Weight (lbs)	Beginner	Intermediate	Advance
77.16 and under	25.9	21	15.75
88.19	29.2	23.6	17.2
99.21	32.4	26.1	18.9
110.23	35.5	28.5	20.5
121.25	37.95	30.25	21.45
132.28	40.8	32.4	22.8
143.3	44.2	35.1	24.7
154.32	47.6	37.8	26.6
165.35	51.0	40.5	28.5
176.37	54.4	43.2	30.4
187.39	57.8	45.9	32.3
198.42	61.2	48.60	36.1

#### • MULTIPLY WITH YOUR FITNESS FACTOR:

▪ SURFING AT LEAST 4 TIMES A WEEK - 0% (0.00)

▪ SURFING 2 TIMES A WEEK - 10% (1.10)

▪ SURFING 3 TIMES PER WEEK - 5% (1.05)

▪ SURFING 1 TIME A WEEK - 20% (1.20)

For example, a weight of 121.25 lbs and being an intermediate surfer will give 30.25 liters. Then considering the fitness by surfing 2 times a week,  $30.25 \times 1.10 = 33.275$  liters.

Lastly, remember that the volume dictates how much you float on your board. In addition to this, remember these:

• TOO MUCH VOLUME = YOU FLOAT TOO MUCH

• THE HEAVIER THE SURFER, THE MORE VOLUME

• MORE VOLUME FOR SMALL AND WEAK WAVES

## 4. CONSIDER THE SHAPE

The board's shape depends on its length but it also depends on the nose and tail. In terms of the nose, a board can have a pointed, round pointed, or round one.

For the tail designs, here are the different ones you can choose from:

### **Squashtail**

It's the loosest of all tails and is the daily all-rounder tail. It's also the most common choice for everyday surfing conditions. Squashtails make it easy to turn on the face and to drive off the bottom.

### **Thumbtail**

It's a wide roundtail that provides more release on the pocket but not much drive.

### **Pintail**

Offers limited mobility but is great for gun surfboards. It also offers more speed and stability for your board.

### **Roundtail**

Allows smooth and flowy turns. It doesn't release much in the pocket but enough to ride in daily conditions.

### **Rounded pintail**

This combination of the round and pin tail gives the board the stability of the pin at high speeds and is good for holding during long turns.

### **Diamondtail**

This has a lot of releases but is tight on a rail. This makes a board fast and agile since it makes the board turn faster and faster. This is considered a 'cousin' of the squashtail.

### **Swallowtail**

The cut in this design allows the tightest turning arc, which means you have more control over sharp turns. It also allows easy pivoting and changing direction. This is good to use in clean and smaller waves since it provides more lift in the back.

## 5. WHAT MATERIAL IT'S MADE OF

There are different types of surfboard materials. The construction affects the surfing performance, the board's durability, and its weight. Depending on your budget, your surfing level, and your surfing style, you can choose any of the following materials:

### **PU/Polyester:**

The most common material for boards is a PU foam core with a polyester resin. Surfboards made of these materials tend to be a little heavier. When the core is damaged, it must be repaired immediately since it can draw water when exposed. These constructions, however, provide a little more flex and smoother glide in rough conditions. Boards made of these will also be a little cheaper.

### **Soft top:**

This is another common board material consisting of a foam core covered with synthetic wrap. Boards made of these are buoyant, light, and stable. However, they can also be less durable because of their soft, resin-free construction.

### **Epoxy:**

Epoxy boards usually have an EPS foam core with an epoxy resin coating. These are extremely strong and tough materials. The EPS core has more buoyancy and the epoxy resin is more resistant than polyester resin. These boards are durable, light, and can plane better in the waves. However, they can be a little more expensive than other materials.

### **Wood:**

These are not so common these days because they're heavier and less technical than the newer board constructions. Wood surfboards are also not easy to carry and transport.

### **Polyurethane:**

This material is known for smooth turning and more responsiveness than epoxy boards. It's also heavier than an epoxy board since a polyurethane board has a polyurethane foam core with polyester resin on top. It's also usually reinforced with a wood stringer down the center.

## 6. GET ACCESSORIES

Aside from the surfboards, consider getting accessories such as:

### Deck Pads

These come in a variety of designs from complete deck pads with multiple sections to a tail kick pad that'll help you improve your skills. These may include a tail pad, grip, and tail grip that are usually stuck at the tail end of the surfboard.

### Wax

You use wax to be able to grip the deck of the surfboard. It ensures that you don't slide off when paddling and when standing up while surfing. There are different wax available that are dependent on the water temperature, including tropical water wax, coldwater wax, and warm water wax. You can use these as base coat wax.

The easiest way to find out which wax you need is by learning the temperature of the water you'll be surfing in first. When applying, use a base coat wax first before applying a regular wax on top.

### Fins

Here are the most common fins in a board:

**Single** - This is great for training your surfing and going back to the basics. With a single fin, you will likely rely on your rails to put a turn in.

**Twin** - This is usually found on fish surfboards. Twin fins help loosen up your board and provide heaps of release off the tail.

**Thrusters (3-fin setup)** - This is the most common setup and offers drive and stability.

**Quad** - This is a good line fin setup that will hold in heavier waves. It offers great drive and direction with a tail release in turns.

**Five fin** - This offers the most flexibility. With five fins, you can easily adjust the setup according to your style and the conditions. However, this isn't one of the most common options. Even pro surfers rarely use this.

## Leashes

These play a crucial role in a surfer's safety and stop the boards from floating away after the surfer falls off or hits other boards. One good recommendation is to use a straight leash of about the same length as your board. The leash allows you to be attached to your board without being too short and risking the board hitting you and causing injuries.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

This concludes our surfboard buying guide. Make sure to check all of the things mentioned above when buying your board and you won't have a hard time choosing the ideal one for you. We hope you found it useful!

