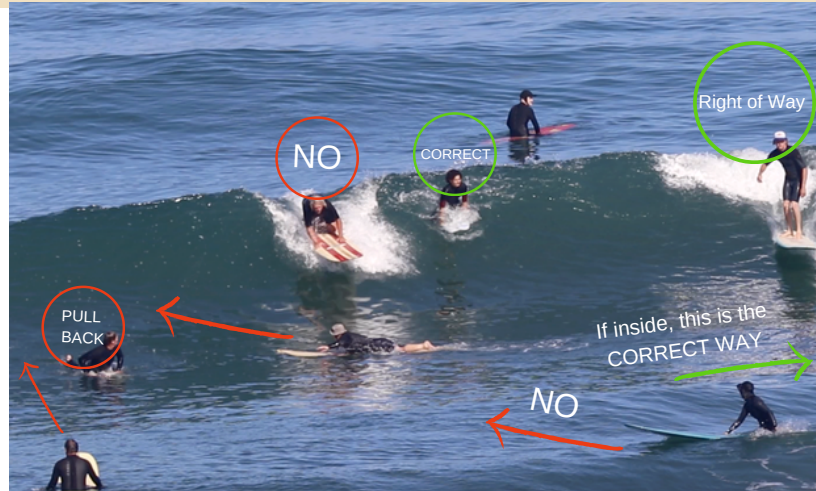


Surf Ethics 101

HOW TO KEEP YOURSELF + OTHERS SAFE IN THE LINEUP



Did you know?

The surfing population in the U.S. has grown by over 2.5 million since 2020. That's roughly 6,000 new surfers daily, many of whom lack adequate experience and surf safety knowledge, resulting in a 300% increase in surfing accidents since '19. Knowledge is power. Let's utilize the following information to help create a safer surfing experience for everyone to enjoy.

The Bottom Line:

THE OCEAN IS QUITE DANGEROUS, AND WITHOUT PROPER KNOWLEDGE, IT CAN BECOME DEADLY. SAFETY SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE FIRST THING IN MIND.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT'S BEST TO KNOW THE GROUND RULES OF SURFING ETHICS, OR WHAT WE SOMETIMES LIKE TO REFER TO AS SURFING'S "CODE OF CONDUCT."

THIS ETHICAL GUIDELINE HELPS SAFEGUARD ALL SURFERS WHILE MAINTAINING POSITIVE VIBES IN THE WATER AND A MUTUAL RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER. FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES NOT ONLY HELPS INCREASE EVERYONE'S WAVE COUNT BUT CAN ALSO PREVENT DANGEROUS COLLISIONS, ALLOWS SURFERS TO ENJOY UNINTERRUPTED WAVES, AND HELPS YOU FOCUS ON IMPROVING YOUR SURFING SKILLS VERSUS BATTLING CROWDS FOR WAVES, WHICH IS BOTH FRUSTRATING AND EXHAUSTING.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY DOING OUR PART IN FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES, WHICH WILL HELP SAFEGUARD ONE ANOTHER IN THE LINEUP. EVERYBODY WINS!

NOW THAT THAT'S CLEARED UP LET'S DIVE INTO THE SKILLS AND RULES YOU'LL NEED TO LEARN BEFORE YOU SET FOOT IN THE SURF.

I. KNOW YOUR ABILITIES

KNOWING HOW TO CHOOSE THE CORRECT SURF SPOT SUITED TO YOUR ABILITY IS CRUCIAL. RESEARCH IT BEFORE YOU GO. YOU CAN ALWAYS HEAD TO KEEPITCORE.ORG TO CHECK THE DAILY HAZARDOUS CONDITION RATINGS (1 = MELLOW CONDITIONS SUITABLE FOR ALL ABILITIES, 10 = EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AND EXPERTS ONLY).

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH SURF SPOT, YOU CAN CHECK OUT WEBSITES SUCH AS WANNASURF.COM OR SURFLINE.COM, WHICH HAVE GREAT DETAILED INFO, INCLUDING THE IDEAL SWELL/WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR EACH LOCATION AND THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS.

FIGURE 1.2 DESCRIBES AN ADVANCED BREAK IN SAN DIEGO, CA. YOU CAN ALWAYS ASK THE LOCAL LIFEGUARDS OR FELLOW SURFERS IN THE LINEUP FOR MORE INFORMATION. ASKING IS BETTER THAN FINDING OUT FOR YOURSELF.

SOME SPOTS HAVE HOLLOW, POWERFUL WAVES, WHILE OTHERS OFFER SMALLER, SOFTER WAVES. THE TYPE OF WAVES DEPENDS ON BOTH THE MECHANICS OF THE SURF SPOT ITSELF AND THE VARIABLE OCEAN CONDITIONS THAT CHANGE DAY TO DAY.

CHOOSING THE CORRECT SURF SPOT, READING SURF FORECASTS, AND FINDING HOW TO NAVIGATE OUT TO A NEW LINEUP CAN ALL BE VERY TRICKY. IDEALLY, IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU WENT SURFING WITH AN EXPERIENCED FRIEND OR A TEACHER FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL TIMES. USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM, AND BE SURE TO ASK THE LIFEGUARDS OR LOCAL SURFERS FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SURF SPOT.

MOST OFTEN, BEACHES WITH A SAND BOTTOM TEND TO BREAK FASTER AND HOLLOWER, MAKING THE WAVE FACE STEEPER & MORE CHALLENGING FOR MOST SURFERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, MANY ROCK OR REEF SPOTS, SUCH AS CALIFORNIA'S ICONIC REEF BREAKS, CAN BE AN EXCELLENT PLACE FOR NOVICE SURFERS LOOKING TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS WITH A MORE GRADUAL WAVE FACE AND SLOWER WAVE TEMPO. SOME OF SAN DIEGO'S SPOTS THAT WOULD BE A GREAT OPTION INCLUDE OLD MAN'S TOURMALINE, 15 ST DEL MAR, BIRD ROCK, BEACONS, GRANDVIEW, AND SWAMIS REEF.

THE CORE PROJECT
@THECORE_PROJECTT

The CORE Project's mission is to advance ocean safety through research, outreach & education.

Figure 1.1

BEACH WARNING FLAGS



Figure 1.2

SURF SPOT CHARACTERISTICS		
SURF SPOT QUALITY	World Class	TIDE, SWELL AND WIND
Wave quality	Pros or kamikaze only...	Good swell direction
Experience	Regular	Good wind direction
Frequency		Swell size
WAVE		1m / 3ft and holds up to 5m / 16 ft and over
Type	Beach-break	Best tide position
Direction	Right and left	Best tide movement
Bottom	Sandy	Low and mid tide
Power	Hollow, Fast, Powerful	Falling tide
Normal length	Short (Alt: 50m)	MORE DETAILS
Good day length	Normal (50 to 150m)	Week crowd
		Week-end crowd
		Webcam url
		Ultra crowded
		DANGERS
		- Rips / undertow

II. COMMUNICATION



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III. PADDLING OUT

AN IMPORTANT PART WE HOPE NEVER TO FORGET:

PADDLING OUT IS SLIGHTLY MORE COMPLICATED THAN MOST THINK BECAUSE WE MUST ENSURE WE'RE RESPECTING OTHER SURFERS RIDING THE WAVES WHILE WE MAKE OUR WAY BACK INTO THE LINEUP. IT'S BEST TO TRY TO STAY CLEAR OF THE SURFER, GIVING THEM AS MUCH ROOM ON THE WAVE AS PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE. USUALLY, THE SURFER PADDLING BACK OUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRYING THEIR BEST TO MOVE OUT OF HARM'S WAY BOTH QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY AND NOT INTERRUPT THE LINE/FLOW OF THE SURFER WHO'S PRESENT ON THE WAVE. WE DO THIS AS A COMMON COURTESY, JUST LIKE THE IDEA OF TREATING OTHER SURFERS HOW YOU'D LIKE TO BE TREATED.

1.) IT'S BEST TO AVOID PADDLING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HEART OF THE LINEUP WHERE PEOPLE ARE SURFING. THAT'S LIKE A CYCLIST GOING HEAD-ON THROUGH TRAFFIC IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HIGHWAY FULL OF CARS. YOU CAN USE THE SHOULDER OR THE CHANNEL IF THE SURF SPOT HAS ONE.

2.) IF YOU'RE PADDLING BACK OUT AND A SURFER IS RIDING A WAVE IN FRONT OF YOU, IT'S BEST TO PADDLE TOWARDS THE WHITE WATER, EVEN IF IT WASHES YOU AROUND AND PUSHES YOU BACK. THIS ALLOWS YOU TO GET OUT OF HARM'S WAY QUICKLY AND NOT JEOPARDIZE THE WAVE FOR THE OTHER SURFER UP AND RIDING. IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, IT'S BEST TO USE YOUR MOST REASONABLE JUDGMENT ON WHERE THE SURFER IS GOING OR WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO NEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, SUPPOSE THEY'RE STARTING TO DO A CUTBACK TOWARDS THE WHITEWATER. IN THAT CASE, THEY'RE LIKELY GIVING YOU ENOUGH TIME TO PADDLE UP THE FACE (THEREFORE, YOU CAN GO THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION OF WHERE THE SURFER IS HEADED).

3.) RESPECT OTHER SURFERS WHEN PADDLING OUT. THERE'S A LOT OF COASTLINE AND A LOT OF WAVES. YOU DO NOT NEED TO CROWD A GROUP OF OTHERS SITTING ON A PEAK.

IF YOU'RE A BEGINNER OR INTERMEDIATE, IT'S BEST TO FIND AN EASYGOING SPOT WITH SURFERS THAT HAVE THE SAME EXPERIENCE LEVEL AS YOU. FOR EXAMPLE, IF YOU'RE AT A MORE ADVANCED LOCATION, IT'S BEST TO TRIPLE-CHECK IF THE CONDITIONS ARE SAFE FOR YOU TO BE OUT THERE. INSTEAD, YOU CAN LOOK FOR A LESS CROWDED PEAK OR SEARCH FOR ANOTHER BREAK NEARBY.

YOU'RE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO CATCH WAVES AND HAVE A BETTER TIME IF YOU SPREAD OUT AND FIND A PEAK TO YOURSELVES DOWN THE BEACH. THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO GET MORE REPS AND HELPS IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS QUICKLY.

4.) SURFER "SOCIAL" DISTANCING

FOR MANY YEARS, ONE UNWRITTEN RULE IN THE SURFERS' CODE OF CONDUCT WAS SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE WATER. IT WAS COURTEOUS TO OTHERS IF YOU GAVE OTHER SURFERS PERSONAL SPACE. IDEALLY, IT'S IMPORTANT TO WAIT 20-30 MINUTES BETWEEN GROUPS OF MORE THAN THREE PEOPLE TO PADDLE OUT TO A PART OF THE BEACH WHERE OTHER SURFERS ARE PRESENT, ALLOWING THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY IN THE LINEUP BEFORE YOU TO CATCH A FEW MORE WAVES BEFORE THEY THE LINEUP GETS MORE CONGESTED, WHICH KEEPS EVERYONE HAPPY.

IT'S A COMMON COURTESY THAT GOES A LONG WAY. IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SURFING NEXT TO SOMEONE FOR SAFETY REASONS, SIMPLY TELL THEM THAT SO YOU DON'T SEEM DISRESPECTFUL.

BE ETHICAL.

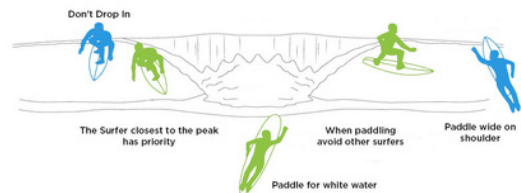
IF YOU SEE A GROUP OF SURFERS ENJOYING A PEAK TO THEMSELVES AT A SPREAD-OUT BREAK WITH SIMILAR PEAKS UP AND DOWN THE BEACH, IT'S BEST NOT TO PADDLE DIRECTLY OUT TO THE PEAK AND PADDLE FOR THE FIRST WAVE YOU SEE. IDEALLY, SIT ON THE INSIDE AND RESPECTFULLY ALLOW A FEW SET WAVES TO GO BY BEFORE TAKING A WAVE. THIS IS A COMMON RULE THAT SURFERS WORLDWIDE HAVE RESPECTED SINCE THE START OF THE SPORT.

WE LIKE TO ANALYZE EVERY PART OF THE BEACH AND ASSES WHICH IS MOST CONSISTENT, SAFEST, AND SUITABLE TO OUR ABILITIES BEFORE DECIDING TO PADDLE OUT. PLEASE BE MINDFUL OF OTHER SURFERS' PERSONAL SPACE SO THAT YOU RECEIVE THE SAME IN RETURN.

IN SOME SPOTS, IT'S SIMPLY UNAVOIDABLE TO SPREAD OUT BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY A SMALL SECTION OF REEF/ROCK WHERE YOU TAKE OFF (AKA REEF BREAKS OR POINT BREAKS, ETC.) IN THIS CASE, YOU CAN PADDLE OUT AND WAIT INSIDE UNTIL EVERYONE AHEAD OF YOU HAS HAD A CHANCE TO CATCH A WAVE OR AT LEAST 15-20 MINUTES HAS PASSED. ONCE THAT TIME HAS PASSED, YOU MAY FINALLY MOVE IN AND WAIT PATIENTLY FOR A SET WAVE. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMONLY FORGOTTEN RULES AND CAN CAUSE UNNECESSARY COLLISIONS AND ALTERCATIONS BETWEEN SURFERS. IF EVERYONE IS PATIENT AND CAN WAIT THEIR TURN, WE ALL CAN DESERVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CATCH AND SHARE WAVES THAT EVERYONE DESERVES.

5.) IF YOU'RE AT A SPOT WHERE THERE'S A CHANNEL (I.E., A SIDE OF THE LINEUP WHERE NO WAVES BREAK AND PEOPLE AREN'T SURFING), THEN UTILIZE IT.

THIS IS THE CASE FOR MOST POINT BREAKS IN C.A. PLACES LIKE SWAMIS, CARDIFF REEFS, C-STREET, ETC. SOMETIMES, THIS IS HARD AT SPREAD-OUT BEACH BREAKS, BUT THERE IS USUALLY A LESS CROWDED AREA TO PADDLE THROUGH. IF YOU'VE SURFED BEFORE, YOU LIKELY KNOW THE FRUSTRATION OF THIS OCCURRENCE. TREAT OTHERS HOW YOU'D LIKE TO BE TREATED, MANY SURF INJURIES OCCUR FROM INCORRECTLY PADDLING BACK OUT AND ACCIDENTALLY COLLIDING WITH ANOTHER SURFER RIDING THE WAVE DUE TO THEIR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ON WHERE TO GO.



IV. RIGHT OF WAY / DROPPING IN

BEFORE PADDLING IN, IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO LOOK BEHIND YOU! THIS IS ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF SURF INJURIES AND CAN SOMETIMES LEAD TO FATAL ACCIDENTS. IN MARCH OF 2021, TWO SURFERS COLLIDED - RESULTING IN ONE FATALITY AND ANOTHER TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY - AT RINCON POINT, ONE OF C.A.'S MOST ICONIC AND, COINCIDENTALLY, MOST CROWDED SURF BEACHES ALONG THE COAST.

THE SURFER CLOSEST TO THE WAVE'S PEAK HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY. THIS MEANS IF YOU'RE PADDLING FOR A RIGHT, AND A SURFER ON YOUR LEFT IS ALSO PADDLING FOR IT, YOU MUST YIELD TO HIM OR HER.

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF VARIATIONS TO THIS RULE: IF SOMEONE IS UP RIDING A WAVE, DON'T ATTEMPT A LATE TAKEOFF BETWEEN THE CURL/WHITEWATER AND THE SURFER. IF THE SURFER RIDING THE WAVE WANTS TO MAKE A CUTBACK, THEY WILL RUN RIGHT INTO YOU. DOING THAT IS ALSO CALLED BACKPADDLING, AND IT'S JUST AS DISRESPECTFUL AS DROPPING IN. IF A SURFER IS SLOWLY RIDING A WAVE, WE DON'T HAVE PERMISSION TO TAKE OFF DOWN THE LINE UNLESS THEY TELL YOU TO GO OR UNTIL YOU'RE 100% AWARE THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE THE ENTIRE WAVE OR SECTION.

IF A SURFER IS RIDING A WAVE AND LOOKS TOO FAR BEHIND WHERE THE WAVE IS BREAKING OR WIPES OUT, THE NEXT SURFER DOWN THE LINE CAN TAKE OFF. IF YOU'RE A NEWER SURFER, IT MIGHT BE BEST TO HOLD OFF ON DOING THIS UNTIL YOU HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE.

IF A WAVE IS BREAKING TOWARDS ITSELF (A CLOSEOUT) AND TWO SURFERS ARE TAKING OFF AT EACH OTHER, YES, BOTH HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY, BUT THIS IS A PERILOUS SITUATION, AND IT'S ADVISABLE TO KICK OUT EARLY TO AVOID A COLLISION.

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WAVE DYNAMICS, YOU CAN VISIT KEEPITCORE.ORG

BACKPADDLING/SNAKING

"SNAKING" IS WHEN A SURFER PADDLES AROUND ANOTHER SURFER TO POSITION THEMSELVES TO GET A WAVE, EVEN THOUGH IT WASN'T THEIR TURN TO CATCH IT. THEY ARE EFFECTIVELY MAKING A BIG "S" AROUND A FELLOW SURFER, WHICH EVENTUALLY COINED THE TERM "SNAKING." THIS CAN CAUSE COLLISIONS AND IS DISRESPECTFUL TO OTHERS. WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL NOT TO CUT THE LINEUP AND TRY TO WAIT OUR TURN. NOBODY LIKES A WAVE HOG.

ONCE YOU'VE CAUGHT A WAVE OR SHOWED SIGNIFICANT INTENT TO CATCH IT, BUT MISSED IT, IT'S COURTEOUS TO RELINQUISH YOUR TURN IN THE ROTATION AND ALLOW OTHERS TO CATCH THE NEXT WAVE THAT COMES IN (UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'RE NOW AT THE BACK OF THE ROTATION). LINEUPS HAVE STRUCTURE, AND IT'S A COMMON COURTESY TO WAIT YOUR TURN. GIVE A WAVE, GET A WAVE! IF YOU SEE SOMEONE HASN'T GOTTEN A WAVE ALL SESSION, DO YOUR PART IN HELPING THEM BY COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS TO WAIT THEIR TURN.

V. COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS WHEN YOU'RE IN A CROWDED LINEUP, AND NO ONE IS SHOWING INTENT TO FOLLOW THE ROTATION RULES! START CALLING OUT YOUR NUMBERED POSITION IN THE LINEUP, AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO TELL SOMEONE THAT THEY'RE NOT FOLLOWING THE RULES CORRECTLY. COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEONE IF YOU'D LIKE TO SPLIT THE PEAK WITH THEM. CALL IT IF YOU'RE GOING RIGHT OR YOU'RE GOING LEFT SO THAT SOMEONE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UTILIZING THE OTHER DIRECTION IF THE WAVE PERMITS. PLEASE TRY NOT TO DROP IN ON SOMEONE.

THIS MEANS AVOIDING CUTTING IN FRONT OF SOMEONE ALREADY RIDING THE WAVE. TO PREVENT THIS, LOOK BOTH WAYS OVER YOUR SHOULDERS WHEN PADDLING INTO A WAVE. THIS IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF SURFING INJURIES. IF YOU ARE TEMPTED TO DROP IN, REMEMBER THIS: NO MATTER HOW GOOD THE WAVE IS IF YOU DROP IN ON SOMEONE, YOU'VE DISRESPECTED THE OTHER SURFER AND THE FLOW OF THE LINEUP AND YOU ARE PUTTING YOURSELF AND OTHER SURFERS AT RISK.