

Windslicer paddles ~ general stroking instructions



If you are new to narrow blades you should read up on the different techniques with this style of paddle see "Sea Blades: Fashion or Function?" for references.

Windslicer Greenland-style narrow blade paddles are not symmetrical and are designed to be held in one specific orientation with the lettering on the blades the right way up and facing the paddler. This is the position for normal forward paddling and when held like this the blade will tend to 'slice' in its entry to the water in the Greenland stroking style. This style of stroking provides a sure grip in the water. The paddler actively **braces against** the downward pull from the blade. Slicing results in all the water flowing across the blade in one direction and thus 'fluttering' from the blade action in the water is very much reduced. Should the paddler require support from the blade it merely needs to be held still or actively pushed forward in a reverse stroke in order to plane and provide upward pressure to lean on from the back of the blade.

At the end of the forward stroke the sliced blade is in the correct orientation to actively plane upwards out of the water to finish the stroke quickly as described in *Sea Blades: Fashion or Function?*



Left hand blade start, hand grip position ("shoulder") and loom

The most comfortable position for gripping the *Windslicer* paddle is on the loom near the blade ends. The *Windslicer* loom cross section changes all the way from the middle of the paddle to the start of the blade so that the user should be able to determine their hand position from feel alone. The *Windslicer* loom in cross section is similar to a longitudinal section through an egg but with a flat on one side. With a little familiarity the user should be able to feel easily from the hand grip if the paddle is in the correct orientation. When held in the correct orientation the blade will automatically slice in the Greenland style.



Top view of left hand blade start and loom hand grip position

In other orientations the blades will behave differently in the water and some of these may be desirable in certain circumstances.

In general terms the major difference between a narrow blade and a conventional wide blade, is that the paddler must have a more 'positive' attitude to the water and become accustomed to submerging the paddle, if need be, to generate support and thrust. In practice this means extending the waterside hand a little closer to the water than is the case with a wide blade paddle at the end of a shaft.

The Greenland sliding stroke can be used with a standard, full-length *Windslicer*. The paddle can also be easily extended easily when bracing or turning quickly. In an extended turn one hand grips the loom a little less than half way while the other grips the upper blade along its length.

Experiment and see!

Finish and maintenance

Windslicer paddles are treated with "Danish Oil". While this finish is not as durable as some others, it is non-toxic and has the considerable advantage of easy maintenance.

After a period of use the paddle can be washed in freshwater and allowed to dry. A single coat or several coats of Danish Oil can be applied by brush or fingers to restore the finish. When the final coat is well dry the high gloss can be reduced to a matt finish if desired with fine steel wool. This dulls the surface and can help to prevent the paddle slipping in use when wet.

The paddle can be treated at anytime with Danish Oil but especially if bare patches of wood are evident. Frequency of re-treatment obviously depends on use but should be at least once a year. The paddle should be stored in a dry place when not in use for more than a few days.

Should scuffing or scratches roughen the surface, fine sandpaper (400 grade or greater) can be used to restore the desired smoothness especially at the shoulder and where the hands grip the paddle normally. After sanding, two or three coats of Danish Oil should be applied before use. The last coat should be allowed a couple of days to dry hard before flattening the high gloss finish (if desired). This time is obviously made shorter in a warm, dry environment but proximity to heaters should be avoided.

Windslicer blade tips and edges are European oak and the paddle wood is Douglas Fir.



Left hand blade end with scarfed oak tip and edges



Windslicer paddles are supplied in a fleece paddle bag.

Happy paddling!

Peter Lamont, Isle of Luing, Scotland