How To Fit Water Sports Products

Whether relaxing on a lake or looking for the next big wave to surf, nothing says summer like hitting the water. Make sure you have everything you need when you hit your favorite spot this year. Below are some tips to make sure you get the right product you need.

How to Buy A Personal Floatation Device (PFD)

The common name for a Personal Floatation Devise is a Life Vest. When preparing to head out on the water for a fun-filled day of water skiing, boating, fishing or other water sport, you must make sure you have a reliable, appropriate personal flotation device (PFD) with you. There are several different types of flotation devices that come with different US Coast Guard (USCG) classifications. In the information outlined below you will learn what types of PFDs are available and which type is appropriate for your water sport. PFDs are a must have…whatever the water related activity!

Life Vests (PFDs)

- Life vests are a must for all types and levels of water sport activities.
- Life vests are worn like a jacket and usually offer a zipper or buckle closure in the front.
- The size of life vest you buy depends on your weight and size.
- Manufacturers indicate the recommended weight range for their vest sizes.
- It is important to test a PFD in shallow water or a guarded swimming pool to make sure it fits appropriately and is in proper working order.
- Also, be sure to always check the condition of your life jacket(s) before heading out for any water sport activity. When boating, make sure you always have enough life jackets on board for every passenger.

- **Life Vest Types**
  - Type I PFD - Off-Shore Life Jacket
    - Commercial style, reversible, easy to put on
    - Provides the most buoyancy
    - Effective for all waters - especially where rescue may be delayed
    - Designed to turn most unconscious wearers to a face-up position in the water
  - Type II PFD - Near-Shore Buoyancy Vest
    - Intended for calm, inland water or where a quick rescue is possible
    - Will turn some unconscious wearers to a face-up position in the water (turning is not as definite as with a Type I PFD)
  - Type III PFD - Flotation Aid
    - Both lightweight and comfortable
    - Good for conscious wearers in calm, inland water or where a quick rescue is possible
    - Designed so wearers can place themselves into a face-up position in the water (wearer may have to tilt head back to avoid flipping over)
    - Type III foam vest offers same minimum buoyancy as Type II PFD
    - Type III foam vest comes in many colors and sizes and is most comfortable for continuous wear
  - Type IV PFD - Throwable Device
    - Intended for calm, inland water with heavy boat traffic
    - Designed to be thrown to a conscious person in the water and to be held by user until rescued
    - Not to be worn
    - Type IV devices include buoyant cushions, ring buoys and horseshoe buoys
    - Should be used in conjunction with a wearable life jacket
  - Type V PFD - Special Use Device
    - Intended for specific activities
    - Should only be used in accordance with the approved condition(s) on its label

How to Buy a Wakeboard

Wakeboarding offers a different set of thrills and requires a different set of skills than traditional water skiing. As the sport has grown in popularity, the variety and sophistication of the products has increased.

Choosing the Right Wakeboard

There are two main factors involved in determining which type of wakeboard is right for you:

Riding Style

- If you come from a surfing or water/snow skiing background, you will probably prefer a *single-tip board*. This design has a more pointed front and a square back, much like the design of a surfboard.
- If your experience has been primarily in snowboarding or skateboarding, you will be more comfortable with a *twin-tip board*. Twin-tips are more rounded in both the front and back, like a snowboard or a skateboard.

Ability Level

- **Beginners**
  - Beginners should opt for a square railed board that offers control, stability and the ability for long, sweeping cuts outside the wake.
  - This version is generally less expensive because they do not include many of the high-tech additions of more advanced boards.
  - Square rails, however, make it more difficult to make landings from air tricks because the edges are sharper (less rounded) and make it easier to catch an edge.

- **Advanced**
  - Advanced riders will prefer a board with round rails.
  - Tricks are easier and softer to land because there is less of a chance of catching an edge.
  - Round rails also enable the board to go faster and provide a quicker lift on jumps.

Other Factors to Consider

- **Dimensions**

  - Most wakeboards are made between 120-150 centimeters in length.
  - Most boards will come with an indication of the proper size and weight of the rider.
  - If in doubt, choose the longer board because a shorter board will not perform well if the rider is too tall or heavy for it.
  - In general, the shorter the board the less stability in starts and turns, so beginners should also choose a slightly longer board to make learning easier.
  - Wakeboard widths generally range from 39 to 43 centimeters. The width is made in conjunction with the length of the board.

- **Rocker**
  - The amount of rocker describes a wakeboard's bottom profile using the angles where the board curves at either end. Wakeboard rockers have three major categories: continuous, continuous/progressive and three-stage.
  - Continuous rockers offer predictable performance with a smooth curve from tip to tail. It accelerates smoothly and generates a comfortable pop off the wake.
  - Continuous/progressive rockers have a continuous rocker through the belly and then become gradually more angled around the area under the feet.
  - Three-stage rockers are also designed for enhanced acceleration and an aggressive lift off the wake. They typically have a significant flat spot in the middle of the board and then kink or curve abruptly under the feet and flatten out off the tip and tail.
  - Wakeboards generally come with rockers between 5-6 centimeters.
  - A higher rocker will have a more rounded bottom-- makes it easier to land jumps.
  - A lower rocker will have a flatter bottom-- is easier to control when going straight and accelerates better.

- **Fins**
  - Fins keep the board traveling in the direction in which you point it and prevent it from freely rotating on the water. It does this using vertical depth and the shape of the *foil*, or profile, of the fin from front to back.
  - Wider foils move more water and create drag and lift under your feet.
  - Thinner foils push less water and let the fin guide your board without resistance.
  - Depth and Base
    - Rocker and fin hole placement should be considered when selecting a fin depth.
    - Extra rocker pulls the fin up out of the water and compromises hold, as will a wider fin setting.
    - Elongated bases address rocker problems, giving the water a snowy feel and giving shallow fins more surface area for effective cutting and tracking.
    - Measure the rocker and fin holes in a complete board that feels comfortable to you and compare it to those in a new board you're thinking about buying.
  - Conditions
    - Rough conditions call for a larger fin that will provide hold and control while you're bouncing around in the chop.
    - For smooth, clear conditions, most boarders prefer the maneuverability of a smaller, thinner fin.
  - Styles
    - In general, a ramp style fin is a good place to start. It is considered the most universal of shapes, and seems to work for a lot of different riding styles. Having a few sets of fins can give you almost as much versatility as owning a collection of complete boards. A long base shape with different depths and foils offer a great deal of riding variety.

- **Bindings**

  - Overlay
    - The overlay provides the majority of foot support by pulling the toe and heel pieces together, and creating a snug, secure attachment for your board. They should be cut or molded thick enough to offer support, but not so thick that they don't stretch.
    - Overlays work effectively by pushing your heel down; many newer bindings have adjustable straps, laces or buckles in the overlay package to accomplish this.
    - These closures range from firm plastic with a ratcheting buckle to systems with a lace-up closure connected to a rubber or cordura overlay. Closures must be cinched down enough for consistent, all-over, non-binding pressure.

  - Underlay
    - The underlay makes contact with the top of your foot and the Achilles tendon area. Today's underlays are usually made from some form of EVA (Ethylene Vinyl Acetate, a foam and rubber hybrid). EVA is much lighter than rubber and allows for vibrant, contemporary colors.
    - EVA underlays vary from very flexible to very stiff.
    - A stiffer underlay offers more support, but may impede comfort and easy on-and-off. Softer underlays will be comfortable but may not offer all the structure you desire.
    - Make sure that when you wear the boot, there aren't any areas that pinch or bind your foot. There are also variations in the type of rubber/neoprene laminated to the EVA for comfort and grip on the skin. Ensure that there is a bond between the rubber and EVA, and that anything sewn or cut on the underlay is clean and sturdy looking.

  - Hardware
    - Hardware is usually made from metal or nylon. The hardware functions to hold the binding pieces together and support to the side of the foot.
    - Good hardware should be ergonomically designed, curving into the arch and out at the toes. The heelpiece should sit like a fitted cup and offer support all the way around the heel.
    - Make sure that your foot can't slide on top of any of the hardware pieces; landing in that position will cause bruises on your foot.

  - Baseplate
    - A baseplate must be strong and stiff; a flexible baseplate will reduce the feel and control you have over your board.
    - The strength and stiffness of a plate is based on the quality and thickness of aluminum.
    - Your baseplate also needs to offer you plenty of stance options. You should be able to get within a fraction of an inch of your ideal stance, including stance width and angles from the middle (rail to rail) of the board.

- Footbed
  - Footbeds should offer not only a lot of support, but also a comfortable resting place for your feet. The support feel in footbeds is similar to that in skates, and basketball or running shoes.
  - The heel should sit a little higher than the ball of the foot to accommodate the ankles and knees. The bed should also have a nice heel cup to hold you firmly in place.
  - On the surface of the footbeds, look for a comfortable form of traction to keep your soles from sliding around when they get wet.
  - A raise under the toes and an arch support are typical for most bindings, giving you leverage on your toe side edge and keeping you from sliding out the toe hole.
  - For shock absorption, make sure the foot bed isn't too soft. Some manufacturers use two different densities of foam for a combination of comfort and shock absorption. Others have gone to air and gel pockets under the heel for added shock absorption.
- Entrance/Adjustment
  - Bindings with some flexibility, adjustability and good finger holes make for easy on-and-off. If you like to ride with a boot that is really snug or tight, then your boots are going to be a little hard to get into. If you're using lots of force and soap, then you should consider something bigger or more adjustable. Adjustability can mean one of two things:
    - You can tighten the boot around your foot with straps, buckles, ties and closures
    - You can take the boot apart and tighten the overlays. With some adjustment in the overlays, you can buy a boot that you will be able to adjust to keep snug even after it is broken-in.

Choosing the Right Rope

Wake boarders require a stiffer rope than water skiers to help perform tricks. A tighter, stiffer rope that does not stretch helps you get more air and be able to pull yourself through flips and spins. If you mainly wakeboard or are trying to improve your skills and learn tricks, a stiffer rope is your best bet. If you spend equal amounts of time skiing and wakeboarding, and you are an occasional or recreational user, a low-stretch rope will do the job. This gives you some stretch for recreational water skiing, but also offers enough stiffness to pull against when wakeboarding.

- **Types**
  - Low stretch ropes are generally constructed of polyethylene or some blend of it. These generally stretch around 1 percent in length when under a normal wakeboarding load.
  - No-stretch ropes are constructed using a material called Spectra. Spectra rope is very strong and has almost no elastic properties. They stretch less than half a percent when under load.
  - Multi-purpose rope- if you're only buying one rope and most of your time is spent water skiing; a ski rope should be your choice even if you are wakeboarding.
- **Length**
  - Wakeboard ropes vary in length, but most are sixty to seventy feet long.
  - Some are one piece with no length adjustment, while others offer multiple adjustment loops.
- **Handles**
  - Wakeboard handles tend to be more specialized than water-ski handles because they offer more features that make tricks and aerial maneuvers easier.
  - Most wakeboard handles have a wider grip than water ski handles.
  - Wakeboard handles commonly have grips that are 13-15 inches wide, whereas ski handles are generally 11-12 inches wide.
  - The increased grip width makes it easier to perform tricks requiring the handle to be passed behind the rider's back.
  - Wakeboard handles usually have a rope braid for the rider to hold onto; or offer a second, smaller handle grip built into the rope for a stronger hold.
  - Most wakeboard handles have neoprene foam floats on them to keep the handle floating.

How to Buy A Knee Board

If you are looking for a unique water sport that is similar to water skiing and just as thrilling, kneeboarding is for you. Kneeboarding offers all new challenges and thrills, but having the right equipment for your size and ability is essential to enjoy the sport.

Choosing the Right Kneeboard

Choosing between the two basic types of kneeboards offered by top manufacturers depends primarily on what type of kneeboarding you plan to do.

Types of Kneeboards

- Recreational
  - Most recreational kneeboarders use a rotomolded board, which is widely available and less expensive than high-tech models.
  - The soft, wide edges of rotomolded boards are best suited for beginners and boarders just out for a good ride.
  - The design allows for smooth turning and good control for even the novice kneeboarder.
  - The boards are relatively thick and very buoyant, so they help act as a flotation device after a spill. Some rotomolded boards offer fins to help make turning easier.

- Competitive
  - Compression-molded boards offer more performance and durability for the advanced kneeboarder.
  - These are thinner, lighter and have sharper edges to allow quicker turning and tricks.
  - Compression-molded boards are not as buoyant as rotomolded versions, which allows advanced users to utilize deep-water starts.

Kneeboard Styles

Whether you are a beginner or advanced, there are two general styles of kneeboards, and the one you choose depends on what you are planning to do out on the water.

- Trick board
  - Features a rounded bottom and rounded edges to make it easier to perform tricks.

- Slalom board
  - Designed for the specific use of slalom boarding.
  - Has sharper edges to allow for better turning and holding the edge through the turn.

Choosing the Right Rope

Kneeboarders require a stiffer rope than water skiers to help perform tricks. A tighter, stiffer rope that does not stretch helps you get more air and be able to pull yourself through flips and spins.

- Low stretch
  - Low stretch ropes are generally constructed of *polyethylene* or a polyethylene blend. These generally stretch around one percent in length when under a normal kneeboarding load.

- No-stretch
  - No-stretch ropes are constructed using a material called *Spectra*. Spectra® rope is very strong and has almost no elastic properties. They stretch less than half a percent when under a normal load.

- Multi-purpose
  - If you mainly kneeboard and are trying to improve your skills and learn tricks, the spectra rope is your best bet.
  - If you spend equal amounts of time skiing and kneeboarding and you are an occasional or recreational user, a low-stretch rope will do the job. This gives you some stretch for recreational water skiing, but also offers enough stiffness to pull against when kneeboarding.

Rope length

- Kneeboard ropes vary in length, but most are 60 to 70 feet long.

Handles

- Kneeboard handles tend to be more specialized than water-ski handles because they offer more features that make tricks and aerial maneuvers easier.
- Most kneeboard handles have a wider grip than water ski handles.
- Kneeboard handles commonly have grips that are 13-15" wide, whereas ski handles are generally 11-12" wide. The increased grip width makes it easier to perform tricks requiring the handle to be passed behind the rider's back.
- Kneeboard handles typically have a feature that makes spinning tricks easier. This may come in the form of a rope braid or the newer "launch" handles that offer a second, smaller handle grip built into the rope for a stronger hold.
- Most kneeboard handles have neoprene foam floats on them to keep the handle floating. Kneeboarders ride at fairly slow speed, much slower than water skiers, allowing foam floats to be built onto the handle without having a problem with the water ripping them off.

How To Buy A Surfboard

If you are buying your first surfboard or you're your next upgrade, finding the right board can be a little confusing. There are many factors that need to be considered when looking for a board: your weight and height, ability, kind of waves you will be in and most importantly your personal preference of what you are looking to get out of your new board. Because all of these factors vary from person to person it is impossible to make an all inclusive buyers guide that will tell you exactly what you need. Instead we will try and give you all the necessary information allowing you to make an educated decision on what board will best suit your needs.

As a general rule of thumb, the bigger the board the easier to catch waves and stand up!!!! The thickness will determine how well the board will float. The more it floats the easier it is to paddle and paddle into waves. The wider and longer it is, the more stable it will be when you get up. However, bigger is not necessarily always better if you are looking for something more maneuverable and easier to turn. Once you learn how to ride the face of the wave, it's all up to you. If you still are not sure what you need or you're into your final selections, ask your local Play It Again Sports store what would be best for you.

We will start by introducing and explaining the different types of surfboard shapes available and their characteristics. These shapes include:

- **The Retro Fish**
  - This is a popular alternative to the high performance shortboard. Created in the 70s, the fish is typically shorter and thicker than a short board and comes with a swallowtail and a larger twin fin set up. Its unique shape allows for a looser, faster board for fun on those smaller days. A great board for someone trying to make the transition to shortboarding or spends most sessions riding sloppy waves.
    - Recommended for beginners with experience in other board sports (skating/snowboarding).

- **The Summer Fish**
  - The Summer Fish represents a shortboard version of the retro fish. It is slightly thicker and wider than your traditional shortboard. This helps get through the flat spots on the slow days. The swallowtail helps loosen up the board. If you're not really sure about a performance shortboard this might be the right board for you. The added thickness makes it a great choice for smaller, mushier waves.
    - Recommended for beginners with experience in other board sports (skating/snowboarding).

- **The Performance Shortboard**
  - The shortboard is considered the highest performance of all the surfboard shapes. Its narrow and thin design give the experienced surfer the responsiveness needed for quick, snappy turns and the ability to surf the wave as they please. It has a Thruster Tri-Fin set up.
    - Not recommended for beginners.

- **The Funshape**
  - Also known as a funboard or egg. This board offers the link between the maneuverability of a short board and the ease of a long board... the best of both worlds in a nice little package. If you are a beginner who is only going to have one board covering all your bases, this is the one.
    - Recommended for athletic or experienced rider with other board sports and a light to medium build.

- **The Mini-Longboard**
  - Perfect for the person who likes the feel of a longboard but doesn't need all the extra foam of one. Easier to carry and manage out in the water but with all the surfing ease of a longboard. This board is great for kids and smaller adults looking for a great beginners board or the experienced longboarder needing something more maneuverable.
    - Built for rider with no board sports experience and a light to medium build.

- **The Classic Longboard**
  - A modern replica of what the sport was started on. Paddle into what ever you want and hang ten all the way to the beach. This is among the most popular boards in the water and for good reason, it's easy to start on and always fun.
    - For anyone from your 6 year old daughter to your 250lb father. If you can carry it you can ride it.

- **The Performance Longboard**
  - This is the slightly trimmed down version of the classic longboard. This surfboard is designed with performance in mind rather than the extra buoyancy of the classic. A perfect board for the beginner that is looking to be a little more challenged.
    - Designed if you want a slightly more advanced version of the classic longboard.

Once you have an idea of what is available and what may sound like something you are looking for, you can now find the board that fits your Weight and Size.

How To Buy A Wetsuit

Wetsuits protect you from the elements so your main consideration centers on water conditions. You can find wetsuits that provide the protection you need based on the water temperatures and depths of your typical diving conditions.

Fitting a wetsuit

- A well-fit wetsuit increases insulation and comfort.
- They should fit snuggly buy shouldn't restrict your movement or breathing.
- If a suit is too loose, you allow water to enter, defeating its purpose.
- A wet suit should be sized similar to your regular clothes.

Choosing the Right Wetsuit

Water temperatures and depths

- Water temperature
  - The warmer the water, the less protection you need; the colder the water, the more protection you need.
- Water Depth
  - Depth may be even more important than water temperature because neoprene--the most common material used in wetsuits--compresses with depth, losing its insulation value. Typically, most neoprene wetsuits lose half their insulation value at 60 feet.

Thickness

- Thickness is expressed in inches and millimeters
- Thicker wetsuits provide greater insulation, but the quality of the material plays a part as well
- If your diving conditions vary from the extremes, you should buy the thickest wetsuit to cover your needs
- Refer to the chart below to help determine the appropriate wetsuit based on the water temperatures where you plan to do your diving

Recommended Thickness	
Water temperature	**Thickness recommended**
75-85F	1/16" (1.6mm) neoprene, lycra, polartec
70-85F	1/8" (3mm) neoprene
65-75F	3/16" (5mm) neoprene
50-75F	¼" (6.5mm) neoprene
35-65F	3/8" (9.5mm) neoprene, drysuit

Styles
There are also a variety of wet suit styles to fit your diving conditions.

- **Shorties**
  - These are one-piece, short sleeve shirt and short set.
- **Three-quarter**
  - This one-piece set has short sleeves and legs that extend to the ankles.
- **Full-length**
  - This suit has long sleeves and legs that extend down to the ankles.
- **Full suit**
  - A one-piece suit from neck to ankles.
  - Some styles give you the option to buy a suit with long or short legs.
- **Farmer John/Jane**
  - Two-piece suits that offer a better fit if you have an odd leg-to-torso figure.
- **Dry suit**
  - If your diving conditions are in really cold water or deep depths, you may want to consider a drysuit.
  - Designed to keep as much water out as possible by using rubber seals around the neck, wrists and ankles.
  - Some also use Velcro-style straps around the wrists and ankles to provide an extra measure of sealing.

Determining the proper style

The chart below gives you guidance but you should also consider another factor--protection from the elements. Even a thin suit that covers your arms and legs gives you some protection from sun and scrapes.

Protection From The Elements	
Water temperature	**Style of suit**
80+F	None needed
72-80F	Shortie or three-quarter
65-72F	Full
60-65F	Full wetsuit or drysuit
50-60F	Full drysuit
Under 50	Full drysuit-gloves, hood and booties

Wet Suit Accessories

- **Hats/Hoods**
  - You lose nearly 40 percent of your body heat through your head.
  - A hood is a must for extremely cold diving.
- **Booties and gloves**
  - Provide insulation for your extremities.
  - These also increase your protection from abrasion.
  - Booties help make your fins more comfortable.
- **Vest or jacket**
  - These come in handy when your diving conditions change.
  - Allow for layering.

Basics of Buying a Kayak

There are almost as many kayak models, as there are destinations for the sport, so the first step in purchasing a kayak is to identify your needs. Do you want a racing kayak? One to tackle rapids? One to take in your local lake or river? How often will you use it? How much are you willing to spend? After you've considered these and many other questions, the next step is to study the differences among the many choices.

Choosing the Right Kayak

Kayaks can be divided into four general categories:

- **Recreational kayaks** are all-around boats designed for mild river trips and other casual use on bays and ponds. They are generally wider and shorter than touring kayaks, which makes them easier to turn but more difficult to travel in a straight line.

- **Touring kayaks** are often designed for extended wilderness trips and all the gear they entail. These long kayaks are very stable and have good carrying capacity, but because they track well, they do not turn as easily as shorter boats. They are sometimes called sea kayaks, though they're certainly not restricted to the ocean. Some models are designed for day touring, offering less storage space in exchange for lighter weight and improved maneuverability.
- **Whitewater kayaks** are designed with exceptional maneuverability to negotiate rapids. They are shorter, and can have rounded bottoms or flat planing hulls, and more rocker (upturn in the ends) to deal with waves. They are not enjoyable for touring, because they are difficult to paddle in a straight line.
- **Downriver kayaks** are specialty boats designed to travel quickly through the water, and they are most often used for racing. These boats are very long and narrow, making them tippy and not well suited for novice paddlers. Their straight keel allows them to track efficiently, but they're difficult to turn.

Basics of Buying a Kayak

- **Length:** Longer kayaks have a number of advantages: they are usually easier to paddle, more stable and capable of carrying heavier loads with less loss of performance. They also track better, move faster and glide farther with each stroke than shorter boats, allowing greater efficiency with less effort.
  Shorter kayaks, on the other hand, are no doubt lighter, less expensive (depending on material choice, of course), less cumbersome and easier to transport. But their most important virtue is quicker turns. A short hull is also preferable for paddling on narrow streams, and for smaller individuals and children.
- **Width:** The width of a kayak has a definite influence on the boat's handling characteristics. The primary function of width is stability; but handling is sacrificed for that extra width, and a narrow kayak does not work very well in strong currents. Additional width does add to a boat's carrying capacity (though not as much as length), but kayaks that are really wide require a lot of effort to paddle because the hull has to push aside a lot more water.
- **Hulls:** The general principles of kayak design are really quite simple. Hulls with flat bottoms, hard chines (sharp, nearly right-angle edges where bottom and sides meet), and greater flare (curvature of the sides outward) have greater stability. Conversely, round hulls with soft chines (a gradual curve where bottom and sides meet) and less flare have less stability, but are more nimble and easier to roll if they should tip over.
- **Symmetry:** Kayaks are either symmetrical, which means that the front half and the back half of the kayak have the same shape, or asymmetrical, which means that they don't. Symmetry affects not only the efficiency of the boat as it moves through water, but also its ability to turn.
  - Symmetrical boats are better for quick maneuvering, as in negotiating small streams or whitewater.
  - Asymmetrical boat designs usually lengthen and streamline the bow for more efficient and faster passage through the water. Directional control is increased, but turning ability is decreased.
  - There are two types of asymmetrical shapes: Fishform and Swedeform. Fishform boats have more volume fore (ahead) of the midpoint, and Swedeform have more volume aft (behind) of the midpoint.
- **Rocker:** The upturn of the kayak's hull from one end to the other (as viewed from the side of the kayak) is called rocker. Kayaks with a lot of rocker pivot easily because their ends sit higher in the water and offer less resistance to waves. However, they do not track well. Kayaks with little rocker track much better because they resist the turning forces of waves, current, wind, and inefficient paddling strokes. As a result, they do not turn as easily when the paddler applies a proper turning stroke or lean.
- **Bottom Shapes:** The bottom of a kayak (as viewed from its ends) ranges from flat to V-shaped. The more pronounced the V-shape on the bottom, the better the boat's directional control, but the worse it's initial stability. Flat planing hulls are common on whitewater boats, while more rounded bottoms are favored by touring-kayak designers.
- **Chines:** The transition between the bottom of the kayak and its sides is called the chine. An abrupt, nearly right angle transition is called a hard chine, and a smoother, more rounded one is a soft chine.
- **Flare** is defined as the angle of a kayak's sides outward from the hull. Kayaks with flared sides have greater stability, but are more difficult to roll.
- **Volume:** You'll commonly hear kayakers refer to the volume of a boat. This is literally the amount of space inside the boat, which is expressed in terms of gallons or liters.

These days, there are more kayak designs to chose from than ever before. Try to paddle as many different models as you possibly can, and look for the one that fits your most frequent style of paddling. And don't forget: there's no law that says you can't have more than one kayak!