



A complete guide in buying the right fin for your board and your sailing.



The size and type of fin you are using makes a huge difference to your board's performance. Many people will buy a board and then only use the supplied fin no matter what the conditions, whenever they go sailing. This does your board a huge injustice and is akin to trying to use a 4.5 sail no matter what the wind strength is!

Why should I change my fin?

Quite often changing the fin in your board will either increase or decrease the feel of power in your sail. If you are hanging on in strong winds, changing down a fin could be a much easier and quicker option to changing down a sail.

Also, if you are worn out from pumping onto the plane, why not grab a larger fin and save yourself some energy?

A smaller fin might make your wave board feel a little bit looser and easier to turn, where a larger fin might help you to hold a straight line and get bigger airs on your freestyle wave.

What size should I buy?

As a **very** rough guide, buying a fin for a sub 90 litre board, you should be able to go 2cm either side of your stock fin. Eg. If you have an RRD Hardcore Wave Small with a 21cm fin, the board should work well with a 19cm or a 23cm wave fin. This guide is very rough and the size of the fin really depends on the shape of your board. For instance, boards with a lot of vee can get away with smaller fins, whereas a flat board will need a slightly larger one.

Below are four tables for popular sizes of traditional wave boards, onshore wave boards, freestyle wave boards and freeride boards. The tables give you an idea of the fin range your board might have, based on its style, volume, width and length. Again it must be stressed that this is just a **rough guide** and if you are unsure please contact us and we will be happy to give you advice. The minimum fin in the guide should generally correspond to the minimum sail you use in that board and will make the board feel loose and turny but later to plane. The maximum fin will make the board feel more freeridey and a bit earlier to plane.

The tables are all based around an average weight sailor. A heavier sailor may need slightly more fin for given conditions, but generally would be on a bigger board (the opposite situation for lighter sailors) therefore body weight has not been added as a variable here. Generally the better your skill, the smaller the fin you can get away with. More skilled riders don't tend to put as much pressure on their back foot and are therefore less likely to spin out with a small fin.

Traditional Wave Boards



Volume	Max Width	Length	Minimum Fin	Maximum Fin
70	52	240	19	23
75	54	242	20	24
80	56	244	21	25

Onshore Wave Boards



Volume	Max Width	Length	Minimum Fin	Maximum Fin
70	55	225	19	23
75	56	227	21	25
85	58	229	22	26

Freestyle Wave Boards



Volume	Max Width	Length	Minimum Fin	Maximum Fin
80	56	238	21	25
85	58	240	23	27
95	60	242	25	29

Freeride Boards



Volume	Max Width	Length	Minimum Fin	Maximum Fin
110	66	248	28	36
125	69	248	34	44
140*	75	250	40	52
155*	80	252	40	60

It is worth bearing in mind that if you own a Fanatic or Mistral board, they tend to be supplied with large fins, whereas RRD fins are generally on the small side.

Fin Shape

It is not only the length of the fin that affects the way it works for you. The chord (width) and shape of the fin also have a big effect on its performance.

Generally speaking, a fin with wider chord will give more lift. This translates into earlier planing and more feel of power in the sail. The wider shape also makes it easier for the fin to release or spin out. Wide fins are very good for onshore wave riding and freestyle where the board needs to get going quickly and the fin needs to be able to be pushed out when required. Fins with a narrow chord tend to be more grippy and are better for high speed and down the line wave sailing where you don't need as much lift and the last thing you want is for the fin to spin out.

Swept back fins (ones that bend towards the tail of the boards) help the board to carve more and so are ideal for wave environments.

Straight fins give less drag and are more directionally stable. These are widely used where speed is the main concern.



Other Considerations

When buying a fin, make sure you choose the correct fin box for your board. For these sizes of board, the fin box will most probably be either a US Box or Power Box and it is vitally important that you choose the correct one.

Power Box



Us Box



Different fin constructions are available. The main types are carbon pre-preg and G10. G10 fins are a lot stronger than pre-preg fins and tend to be harder to ding or break, they are usually a little bit more expensive.

Sometimes G10 fins are extremely stiff (due to the strong construction). This is not necessarily an advantage – a fin that twists slightly is more forgiving and therefore the board is less likely to spin out with clumsy footwork. Nik Baker fins are good examples of very strong G10 fins with sufficient amounts of twist to make them forgiving.

Fins for Beginners*

It is worth noting that while a lot of the larger freeride boards are perfectly suitable for beginners in light (non-planing) winds, they are quite often supplied with fins that are by no means suitable for that use.

For instance, if your 150 litre freeride board has a 45-50cm fin, it may be worth buying a 30-35cm fin to use the board in light winds. In these conditions the long fin won't help. In fact, it will make learning to beach start a lot harder and will mean that you have to sail in deeper (often choppier) water.



Fins for Kids

Kids are now finding it easy to learn either on beginner boards or on boards designed specifically for them (like the JP Young Gun).

If you are teaching your child on a big beginner board, you will notice that they will find it very hard to steer the board with their small rig. If you put a very small fin in the board (eg 22cm) you will find that this remedies the problem. If the board has an option for a centre fin, try downsizing this too – not only will they be able to sail in safe shallow water, they will also find it easier to steer.

If your child is learning on a kid specific board like a JP Young Gun or Fanatic Ripper, it is again worth experimenting with smaller fins. Remember, that these boards are designed to have huge ranges (0.8m to 5.2m sails!) so quite often a smaller fin will make it easier for your child to steer.