

Guidance information for your Paddling Level self assessment

Your comfortable paddling level*

Please try to estimate your paddling level based on the following guidelines. It's not a science, just a rough guide to where you think you are on the scale.

Paddle grades A-C are defined below as a guide for estimating your trip comfort level:

Grade A: Relatively easy landings with escape routes easily available. Trips offer relative shelter from extreme conditions and ocean swell. Some tidal movement may be found, but easy to predict with no major tidal races or overfalls.

Grade B: Some awkward landings, and sections of coastline with no escape routes, should be expected. Tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on these trips. They will also be exposed to the weather and associated conditions.

Grade C: These trips will have difficult landings and will have no escape routes for long sections of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings, ocean swell and surf may be found on all these trips. They will be very exposed to the weather and sea state, therefore require detailed planning and paddlers competent in rough water conditions. The journey may require good conditions for the trip to be viable.

Awards levels are there as a guide, not to suggest an expectation that you should have any awards.

- New start – looking forward to developing basic sea kayaking skills
- Beginner - Basic skills, few sea trips as yet, comfortable up to grade A paddles (equivalent to Start / Discover level)
- Novice - Some training and practice, a few sea trips done, comfortable up to grade A+ paddles (equivalent to Explore Award/2 star)
- Intermediate - Ongoing training / practice, many sea trips done, comfortable up to grade B paddles (equivalent to Sea Kayak Award /3 star)
- Experienced - Trips / training / practice in range of conditions over a few years or more, comfortable up to grade B-C paddles (equivalent to Coastal Sea Kayak / 4 star personal skills)
- More experienced - Well experienced, competent in big conditions, comfortable up to grade C paddles (equivalent to Sea Leader / 4 star and above)

Please select one of the following in the Spond app

1 New start

2 Beginner Grade A

3 Novice Grade A+

4 Intermediate Grade B

5 Experienced Grade B-C

6 More experienced Grade C

Updated (6/12/24)

