

Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own

By Graham Warren, David Gidmark



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This book combines practical woodworking technique with practical canoe use experience... [It] covers every single aspect of canoe paddle building. -- Sawdust and Shavings

Despite the growing interest in making paddles and canoes, it can be difficult to find reliable information on that craft -- except for this book. First published more than a decade ago and having sold 35,000 copies, *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own* is the ultimate modern guide to the traditional craft for both the how-to beginner and the skilled woodworker.

In *Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own*, longtime canoeist and woodworker Graham Warren provides detailed information and guidance to make a canoe paddle that will be used with confidence and cherished for generations.

The book is thoroughly illustrated with photographs, line drawings and plans with measurements for:

- How to make a paddle having a single blade, a bent shaft, or double blades
- How to protect a paddle with oil or varnish
- What to look for when test-driving a paddle
- How to decorate a paddle
- How to care for and repair a paddle.

The authors include an appreciation of the evolution of the paddle plus a special chapter by renowned canoe-buuilding teacher David Gidmark which celebrates paddle-making in the native tradition.

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Editorial Review

Review

A how-to book that's valuable even if you choose never to use the how-to parts. (Linda Turk *Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal* 2001-07-08)

Will challenge any canoeist ... to design and craft a paddle ... This fascinating book ... is richly illustrated. (Art Lander Jr. *Lexington Herald-Leader* 2001-04-01)

Just about anyone can custom craft their own canoe paddle using this book as a guide ... Whether you are a recreational canoeist, a weekend woodworker or someone interested in wilderness skills, this book should provide hours of entertainment, year round. (*New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal* 2001-05-26)

Canoe Paddles makes it possible for many of us novice woodworkers to create our own personal paddles. Whether you are making a paddle from a single piece of wood or a laminated paddle consisting of several pieces, this comprehensive book will show you the way....[This] is an excellent book for creating beautiful, functional paddles. (N. Glenn Perrett *Metroland North blog* 2008-11-10)

This book combines practical woodworking technique with practical canoe use experience... [It] covers every single aspect of canoe paddle building. (*Sawdust and Shavings*)

About the Author

Graham Warren has been building wood-canvas canoes and paddles since 1991. His articles on canoeing have appeared in many journals.

David Gidmark teaches canoe building in Wisconsin, New York, Tahiti and Quebec. His previous books include *Building a Birchbark Canoe* and *Birchbark Canoe*: *Living Among the Algonquin*. Gidmark and his wife live in Maniwaki, Quebec.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Introduction -- Make your own paddles!

Interest in paddle- and canoe-making is today perhaps at an all-time high. Canoeists are fast rediscovering the intense satisfaction to be gained by creating their own equipment rather than merely adopting the often rather soulless stuff to be found down at the canoe store.

Fashioning a paddle is a small enough project that it will not cost the earth or devour all your spare time. On the other hand, the subject is sufficiently deep that it will provide a lifetime opportunity to develop your woodworking skills, to experiment with various designs or to research the rich historical context of the craft. When you make your own paddles, you are immediately connected with the roots of canoeing, roots that stretch back hundreds, even thousands of years. Indeed, in the past, probably few canoeists did not also build their own boats as well as paddles.

Taking the time to learn paddle-making skills will ensure that you get exactly the paddle you want -- a perfect fit, the blade area that you need, created with a wood that you particularly like -- and all at a fraction

of the price you pay for a store-bought paddle. And once you have mastered the basic skills, there are many directions you can take. You might want to progress to power tools and synthetic materials in the quest for the lightest or most efficient paddle. Or you might want to go in the opposite direction and recreate the native skills of paddle-making with an ax and crooked knife, using wood that you have harvested yourself. Why not go on to make a range of paddles to suit all moods and water conditions or build a collection of native paddles, authentically decorated, to form a beautiful and unique display?

At first glance, a professionally made paddle might seem like the kind of thing that only a master craftsperson could produce -- and then only after years of practice. This is simply not the case. Even with modest woodworking skills, you should be able to get good results first time out. In a short while, you will gain a very different perspective on most commercial paddles: Why don't they balance properly? Why is the finish so poor? Why are hardwood paddles nearly always warped?

Creating something beautiful in wood evokes real satisfaction. If you have previously practiced home woodworking limited within the confines of the straight line and right angle, you are in for a liberating experience. Although you may initially find the move away from the security of the ruler and set square a bit scary -- like a first trip into the wilderness without a guide -- it will ultimately become a delight. You will soon find yourself navigating through the wood freely, guided by touch and light.

Making a beautiful paddle is not that difficult. Forming its graceful curves is a technique, not an art. In fact, with quite straightforward methods, you can get your tools to cut intricate curves as surely as any basic geometrical shape. You just need to be aware of the capabilities of your tools, learn to break down the complex paddle shape into a series of simpler ones and work not haphazardly but to a system.

Anyone can make a good paddle, and *Canoe Paddles* will show you the way.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Davis Miller:

The particular book Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own will bring someone to the new experience of reading any book. The author style to describe the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to learn, this book very suitable to you. The book Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own is much recommended to you to see. You can also get the e-book from official web site, so you can more easily to read the book.

Nancy Hunt:

The actual book Canoe Paddles: A Complete Guide to Making Your Own has a lot of information on it. So when you make sure to read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was authored by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This kind of book very easy to read you can find the point easily after looking over this book.

David Miller:

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