

Padding

Padding will take up most of your activity in the water, so it's a good idea to get accustomed to it. It's the reason that surfers are ripped from the waist up so no use complaining. It does the body good. It's also how you'll get away from and catch breaking waves.

Technique

The best padding technique is to alternate your arms from above your head to your waist as if doing the front crawl stroke. Keep your fingers together to catch and push the most water, giving you the best leverage to gain some speed. Be sure also to keep your feet together and perhaps up in the air. This will make sure you're not padding with all your might while slowing yourself down with your feet.

Padding Out

Wait for a lull in the waves. Waves usually come in sets of 3 or 4 at a time and then die down for a bit before they return. Wait for a good sized set and just as they seem to wane, jump on your board and paddle out. It's important not to be too far forward or too far back. You'll want to find the point at which the nose of your board is an inch or so above the water. If you're too far forward, the nose will pick up water. If you're too far back, your nose will be up in the air, but your tail will drag you and slow you down. If you're in just the right spot, your board will cruise with the least amount of effort.

Point your board straight towards the oncoming waves. This will be the path of least resistance.

Getting Past The Break

If you're padding through smaller waves, you can sometimes paddle right through the breaking waves without a sweat. All you need to do is lift your body slightly and let the water pass around you. As the waves get larger though, you may have to fight to make your way through. Here are a couple of tried and true techniques:

Turtle/Alligator Roll

This is your best bet on a long board. As the wave comes, be sure your nose is pointed straight into the breaking wave. Just before it breaks on top of you, grab your board with your arms, roll

underneath and continue rolling until you are back on top of your board. Make sure you don't turn the surf board at all to avoid being carried away by the wave. If you've done it correctly, you're past the wave and haven't lost much ground.

Duck Dive

This is your shortest way past the break with a short board. As the wave is about to break on top of you, point the nose downwards into the water and put your foot or knee on top of the back of the board. Thrust the nose downwards first, then push down with your foot/knee to point the board back upwards and ride it through the wave to the surface.