buyers guide - how to buy a board

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Buying a snowboard is not as easy as it might seem and the main question should certainly not be: 'How will this cool board look with the rest of my gear?'. You need to know quite a few things about yourself, about snowboards and about riding styles before you can choose a board that will fit you and your riding style. This guide will help you through the basics.

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Snowboards - A Detailed Look

Before answering the questions in this guide and using it to select a snowboard, you will need to know the what characteristics a Snowboard can have. Read our section on Snowboard to learn all about it. Once you are done, you can ask yourself the following questions to select a snowboard:

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How much am I willing to pay for my Snowboard?

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There are roughly three classes to distuingish here:

- Entry Level Boards (Â£150-Â£250)
- Mid-Range Boards (Â£250-Â£400)
- Top End Boards (Â£400 and up)

In general cheaper boards will be heavier in weight and simpler in design. As boards get more expensive they get lighter and have more design details to fit certain styles of riding. As you progress in your snowboarding skills you will learn which features a new snowboard should have and your demands will become more specific. Beginning boarders should settle for a cheaper board that will teach them their exact wishes and preferences.

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What is my Skill Level?

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Again there are roughly three classes to distuingish here:

- Newbie: from total beginner to having a few days of riding experience

- Intermediate: comfortable with common riding techniques and starting to try tricks

- Advanced: comfortable with riding all pistes and off slope. Advanced tricks and skills

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What is my preferred Riding Style?

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Snowboarding Styles

Once you have evolved from a beginner to a more experienced boarder, you may want to choose a distinctive Riding Style and adjust your gear according to that choice. Again there are mainly three classes of snowboard riding styles although there are many subclasses. For more information on Riding Styles click the link given to the left. That section will describe how the different Snowboarding Riding Styles work so you can make a choice. In short these are the main classes:

- Freestyle

- Freeride

- Freecarve

Most boards will be in 1 of these categories. Some beginner boards might be a combination of Freestyle and Freeride. It is best to choose a board that will fit your style as soon as possible instead of learning a particular style on a combination board. Many snowboarders learn how to ride on a FreeRide/FreeStyle board and then choose either one of these styles. FreeCarving is often selected by more experienced FreeRide boarders.

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What Length should my Snowboard be?

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Length is one of the most important characteristics of a snowboard. In general there are a couple rules:

- For an averagely built person the board length should reach the chin or mouth of the person.

- Heavier people should have longer less flexible boards

- Lighter people should have shorter more flexible boards

- Freestyle riding is often done with shorter board to allow better manuverability. Freeriding, deep snow and racing boards will be longer in size.

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What Width should my Snowboard be?

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- You should make sure that your feet do not hang over the board too much. Feet that hang over the edges of a board cause Toe and Heel drag. Drag will make it difficult to carve on your edges. So people with big feet should buy wider boards or adjust the angle of their feet. Wider boads are the most common solution.

- Men and heavier people will often need wider boards than women or lighter people

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How flexible should my Snowboard be?

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There are two kinds of flexibility

- Torsional Flex: how flexibile the board is across its width. More torsional flex will make it easier to twist the board which is important in sharper turns.

- Longitidunial Flex: how flexibile the board is from tip to tail. More longitidunial flex will make it easier to bend the board in the length.

FreeStylers need more flexible boards for more board control and maneuverability. FreeRiders and especially FreeCarvers need stiffer boards to keep their boards under control in higher speeds. Heavier people need stiffer boards.

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How deep should the sidecut be on my Snowboard?

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In general there are a couple rules:

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- The depth of the sidecut has everything to do with turning

- A deeper sidecut makes it easier to turn. Beginner boards often have deeper sidecut