

The Basics of Surfboard Fins



Let's get to it, shall we? *Wikipedia* (everyone's favorite crowdsourced information go-to) defines "**surfboard fins**" as:

A surfboard fin or skeg is a hydrofoil mounted at the tail of a surfboard or similar board to improve directional stability and control through foot-steering. Fins can provide lateral lift opposed to the water and stabilize the board's trajectory, allowing the surfer to control direction by varying their side-to-side weight distribution. The introduction of fins in the 1930s revolutionized surfing and board design. Surfboard fins may be arrayed in different numbers and configurations, and many different shapes, sizes, and materials are and have been made and used.

That's pretty straightforward, but if you want it spoken in laymen's terms: a surf fin helps you navigate the waves. There are countless surf fin set-ups for a near endless amount of surfing situations. You likely wouldn't use the same surf fins in Hawaii as you'd use in California, so variations of surfboard fins are necessary to ensure a fun, safe ride – all depending on that area's specifics.

A little more background, *Wikipedia* goes on to say this about the original surfboards:

Historically, surfboards had no fins; some amount of control was achieved through convex hulls and the surfer dragging a foot in the water. A common problem with these early boards was "sliding ass", in which the tail would slip sideways, usually causing a wipeout.

The first fixed fin was introduced by surfing pioneer Tom Blake in 1935. In Waikiki, Blake attached a 12-inch (30 cm) long, 4-inch (10 cm) deep metal keel from an abandoned speedboat to his surfboard and was immediately impressed with the results. Around 1936, Woody Brown independently added a fixed fin to his second surfboard design in San Diego, which further popularized the feature.

Types of Fins

- **Glass on fins.** Fins that are permanently connected to the surfboard through fiberglass. This type of fin was mainly used on older model surfboards. Glass on fins are broken easily and are hard to repair. You rarely see these types of fins today because a different type of fin has replaced them.
- **Removable Fin Systems.** The most common types of fins used today, removable fins are surfboard fins that can be unscrewed from the surfboard and be replaced by different fins or be moved about the board for a different setup in maneuverability and stability.
- **Flexible fins.** These fins are used on most rental boards because of liability. These fins are much safer than a hard fin because they cannot cut you. However, it does lose some of the performance.

So, that's the short version of [surf fin](#) basics. If you're interested in testing out a variety of surfboard fins to make sure you've got the best setup for your needs, go check out [Finatic.com](#) today.