

# Paddlers for Life Windermere

Paddling, thriving, surviving... after cancer.



[www.paddlersforlife.co.uk](http://www.paddlersforlife.co.uk)

It is fantastic that you have decided to come along for a paddle. If you have any queries not answered here please drop us an email. We look forward to welcoming you.

## Why is dragon-boat paddling recommended after breast cancer treatment?

In 1996 a Canadian doctor undertook research which proved that upper body exercise is beneficial for women who have had lymph nodes removed following breast surgery, in particular to manage or prevent lymphedema. He did this by setting up and monitoring a dragon-boat team (they called themselves Abreast in a Boat). Similar research was also undertaken in the UK in 2008 and had similar positive results. As a result of this research there are now 100s of breast cancer survivor dragon-boat teams around the world and they regularly meet at international and national events.

## Do I need to be sporty to get involved with dragon-boat paddling?

**NO** - You do not need to be sporty or fit to start paddling. We welcome paddlers of all ages, shapes and sizes. All we ask is that you have completed your breast cancer treatment at least 3 months ago and that you have no medical reasons why you should not take up paddling (check with your doctor if unsure).

## Do I need to be able to swim?

**NO** - You do not have to be able to swim as you will be provided with a buoyancy aid (BA) to wear in the boat. You will be allocated a BA of appropriate size and shown how to fit this properly.

## Is there any age barrier to taking part?

**NO** - Our members' ages range from 30 to 80. As long as you feel up to taking part, then we would like you in the boat. You can push yourself as little or as much as you like!

## Will I be safe in the boat?

**YES** - Dragon-boating is a safe sport. We have experienced coaches and helms leading the training sessions and the boat is very stable and highly unlikely to capsize. You will wear a buoyancy aid and we have a 'buddy' system to deal with any emergency that may arise. There is also a safety boat which accompanies us on the Lake.

## Will I get wet?

**YES** - Dragon-boating is a water sport and you may get wet (from paddle actions in the boat or from the rain). But with the right gear (a light-weight raincoat and possibly waterproof overtrousers) you will remain comfortable and warm. We have shower and changing facilities for you to change into dry clothes afterwards if necessary.

## What should I wear?

Wear old clothes and have a complete change of clothes with you – this is a water sport and you may get wet! Light-weight layers are best, with a light-weight waterproof coat. You will get hot when exercising, so a thick fleece is not recommended, nor is denim as this holds the water when wet and makes you feel cold. Old trainers or wet shoes with a good grip on the sole of the footwear is advisable so you do not slip getting in and out of the boat – no Wellingtons please!

## Do I need my own paddle?

**NO** - all paddles are provided.

## Will I be the only inexperienced paddler in the boat?

**NO** - we have paddlers with a wide range of experience in the boat. Some have just started paddling and we get new members coming along for a paddle regularly. Other paddlers are very experienced and are able to assist and guide new members

## Can I bring a friend with me?

**YES** - Friends and family are an important part of your support network and are welcome to paddle with us.

## How much does it cost?

It costs £5 to come and have a go and then, should you enjoy it, annual membership runs from April and costs £30 for each individual. (We aim to include everyone who wants to join us and can offer flexibility with membership fees.)

## Where do I park and what time do I need to get there?

The entrance to the marina is opposite the Low Wood Hotel. As you drive in you will pass the garages on your left and will see our lovely dragon boats outside. Continue on past the watersports office and bear round to the left into the large carpark. There is a parking-eye system that you pay for before you leave, or it is possible to purchase a good value annual permit from the Marina office. We aim to get there at 10 o'clock to get the boats ready and do a warm up.

## Do I need to paddle every week?

**NO** – we all have busy lives! We will welcome you for as often as you can make it and there is no expectation for Paddlers to come every week.

## Paddling Checklist

- *Suitable clothes*  
(See description above)



- *Bottle of water*



- *Spare clothes and a towel*



- *Packed lunch*  
(there is a tea/coffee vending machine at the water sports centre)



- *Should the sun shine...  
suncream and hat*



*Some paddlers also bring:*

1) *cycling gloves*



2) *a small garden kneeler  
or karrimat pad to sit  
on in the boat*

