



Ultralight Boatbuilding

Thomas Hill

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Ultralight canoes and small boats are things of beauty, their apparent delicacy concealing great strength. They are lapstrake-constructed from marine plywood planks, each plank overlapping the one below it in a gracefully curved hull. Epoxy glue along the laps gives the hull structural reinforcement, minimizing the need for framing and permitting an amazingly light structure. Round-bilged and elegant, they are built over jigs, but the method is straightforward and not time consuming. You can build a boat that will give you fun and satisfaction, one you can be proud of, in a winter of leisurely weekends. No fancy tools are needed, and care and patience will make up whatever you lack in woodworking skills.

All the information you need is here. Tom Hill, the chief proponent of ultralight boatbuilding and its leading practitioner, describes the method from start to finish using a skiff and canoe as examples. In the appendix is a gallery of ultralight designs, all but one of which you can build without lofting. If you want more flexibility, however, you can adapt almost any lapstrake small-boat design, traditional or modern, to the ultralight method. With some lofting (directions for which are given) you may then build a wide range of boats whose offsets are available. And you may adjust planking thickness and scantlings to give your boat extremely light weight with normal strength, or moderate weight with great strength.

Particularly if you lack an extensively equipped workshop and professional skills, *Ultralight Boatbuilding* will unlock exciting possibilities you considered out of reach.

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