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The existence of a closed geodesic on every Riemannian two-sphere can be obtained using a minimax principle on the loop space. This principle extends to the one-cycle space of every surface and yields a closed geodesic in this case too. We will present various curvature-free relationships between the length of this closed geodesic and the area or the diameter of closed Riemannian surfaces. (Received September 07, 2009)