

The



Learn to Wakeboard



Easy steps for you to progress from your first ride on a wakeboard to your first jumps off the wakes

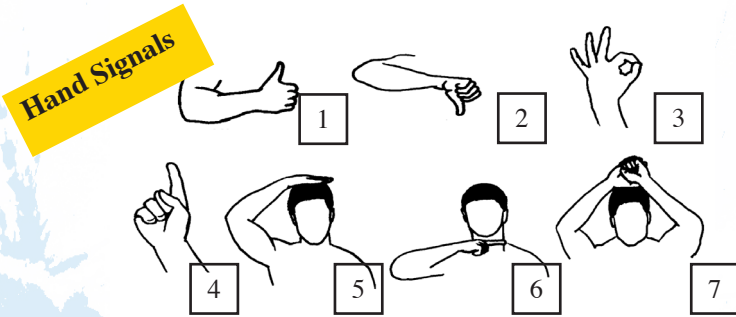


Level 1 – Wakeboard

On land, demonstrate:

The seven rider hand signals

Explain five of the 15 Rider Safety Codes



1. **Speed up:** The “thumbs-up” gesture indicates that the rider would like the speed increased.
2. **Slow down:** The “thumbs-down” gesture indicates that the rider would like the speed decreased.
3. **OK:** If the set speed or boat the path is good, the rider may use the OK signal.
4. **Turn:** When either the rider or the driver wants the boat turned, a circle motion with the arm over the head with one finger in the air is used. It is usually followed by pointing in the direction of the turn.
5. **Back to the Dock:** A pat on the head indicates that the rider would like to return to the dock.
6. **Cut Motor/Stop:** A slashing motion with the hand across the neck indicates the boat is to stop immediately. This signal can be used by the rider, driver or observer.
7. **I’m OK (after a fall):** This important signal indicates that a rider is OK after a fall. It consists of both hands clasped over the head. It should be used every time the rider falls.

Wakeboarder’s Safety Codes

Rule 1: Always wear flotation. A properly fitted personal flotation device is designed to fit snugly, so that it won’t slip up on the body during a fall. The recommended type is a jacket or vest that covers the chest, abdomen and back.

Rule 2: Always be sure your equipment is in good condition. Your personal safety and enjoyment depend on the equipment you use. Check your equipment regularly. Be sure that your board does not have sharp or protruding surfaces that could cut or scrape the rider. Check towropes for frayed areas or broken bridles and handles. Repair or replace damaged or unsafe articles.

Rule 3: Don’t give the starting signal until ready. Make sure you are ready, the slack has been taken out of the rope and you are clear of any dangerous obstacles around you.

Rule 4: Do not ride near docks, pilings, other boats or swimmers. Always look ahead and be sure you are aware of your surroundings and where you are going at all times. Many wakeboard injuries result from collisions with docks or other solid objects.

Rule 5: Never put any part of your body through the handle or wrap the line around yourself in any way.

Rule 6: Never ride in shallow water or an area where there may be obstructions above or just beneath the surface.

Rule 7: When a fall is inevitable, try to fall backward or to either side. A forward fall increases the chances of contact with the board.

Rule 8: Know and use the rider hand signals. It is particularly important to use the rider’s “I’m OK” signal after a fall if you are all right.

Rule 9: If you fall in an area where there is other boat traffic, lift your board half way out of the water. This will signal to other boats that there is a rider in the water.

Rule 10: Never ride to the point of excessive fatigue.

Rule 11: Always ride during daylight, from sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Rule 12: Never ride directly in front of another boat.

Rule 13: Always use equal length ropes when riding double.

Rule 14: Always ensure that the motor is “off” when a rider is entering and exiting the boat.

Rule 15: Always have an observer in the towboat.

Getting Started

WAKEBOARD TERMS:

- Toeside – Rider is edging in toward the wake with his weight is on his toes
- Heel Side – Rider is edging in toward the wake with his weight on his heels

Toeside



Heelide



Frontside spin

- Frontside and Backside – On frontside spins the rider rotates his front (or chest) toward the boat. On backside spins the rider rotates his back toward the boat. Learn frontside spins first since they are easier.

- Switch Stance/Fakie/Revert – These terms all mean the same thing (riding the board with the rider's opposite foot forward)

WAKEBOARD DRIVING TIPS:

Driving for a beginner is a very important part of the wakeboarder's experience. The driver should begin with a slow, gentle pull and ease the rider out of the water. If the rider is having problems reaching a planing position, gradually accelerate the speed on the start. Once the rider is planing on the water surface, it is important to gradually back off on the throttle so that the boat does not obtain too much speed. Ease up to the desired speed once the rider is under control.

The most common mistake in pulling a is accelerating too fast, which can result in the board sliding out from under the rider. When driving a beginner, slow the boat speed down slightly when the rider is learning to do surface turns. The slower boat speed will enable the wakeboard to slide easier on the surface of the water. Once the rider has mastered the surface turn, there is no need to adjust the boat speed.

If the rider appears to be out of control, cut back on the throttle to save him from a hard fall. For example, you may see the rider coming down from a jump over the wake and you notice that his elbows are straight and the handle is far from his hips: Pull the throttle back to the "In Gear" position while they are still in the air. This will relieve some of the line tension in the rope and almost always save them from taking a hard fall.

HANDLE POSITION

A golden rule in wakeboarding is to keep the handle close to your hips whenever you are doing a trick. If the rider is just going along behind the boat, it is fine to have his elbows straight and the handle out, but whenever the rider wants to get air off the wake it's important to teach him to bring the handle in toward his hips. When the rider starts his cut toward the wake; instruct him to bring the handle in slightly, and as he gets air off the wake he should pull the handle in a little more toward his hips while he is in the air. That way if the rider lands a little off balance he can give some of the line tension back to the boat without getting pulled out of the front of the board. Having the handle out and away from the hips on landings will always lead to hard falls.

How To Properly Hold The Handle

For wakeboarding, use the knuckles up grip;



BODY POSITION

The key to wakeboarding is mastering the proper wakeboarding body position. It is a good idea to demonstrate this body position on dry land with your rider before entering the water. The proper wakeboard body position is:

- feet in a sideways stance to the boat
- upper body slightly twisted towards the boat through the hips and shoulders
- weight centered over the feet with slightly more weight on the rear foot
- handle down and arms straight
- knees slightly bent with head up

Suggested Towboat Speeds

Most riders will ride between 16 and 20 mph, depending on the rider's size and weight. For beginner riders a speed of 12 mph for children and 18 mph for adults is recommended.

Level 2 – Deep-water start

Complete a deep-water start and maintain the proper wakeboard position for three seconds

Adjusting the bindings

Before getting on the water, remember that it is important to adjust the positioning of the binding. If you are right foot forward, the term for this is goofy-foot. If you are left foot forward, this is called regular stance. The location of the bindings should be shoulder width apart. The angle of the binding is also important. To start, your feet should be at a slightly ducked angle and should always be symmetrical. A good rule of thumb if your board has measuring degrees on it would be 12 degrees for both feet. Be sure to check your screws before each set.

Helpful
Tip

Helpful Hint: Don't worry about which foot forward you are going to be as you get up the board is going to turn in the most natural position.



GETTING UP ON A WAKEBOARD

Try to relax in the water. Sit upright and the board will float out in front of you.

You have 3 main keys to remember:

- 1) keep your arms straight,
- 2) keep your knees bent, and
- 3) let the boat do the work pulling you out of the water.

When the rope gets tight and the boat slowly accelerates, really focus on keeping your knees as bent as possible. You want to roll your heels down under your bottom, while keeping your knees at your chest. This means that your board will go under water a bit, but that is good as long as you stay balled up (like a cannonball). Don't worry about turning your board sideways – that will happen later. Keep your feet, knees, and shoulders facing the boat. Look straight ahead (not at your feet) and remember the boat will pull you out of the water. Stay in the crouched position until the board rises completely out of the water. Two common mistakes when learning to get up is 1) trying to stand up too quickly, or 2) keeping the board in front of you & it plows too much water. If you bring your heels down & stay balled up (for longer than you think you need to), there should be very little resistance coming out of the water. Once you are on top of the water, stand up slowly, like you are rising from a squat. Let the board rotate so one foot is ahead of the other. Your dominant foot usually will be the rear foot. You will still keep your knees bent & your arms straight/relaxed.



Level 3 Maintain proper wakeboard position for 20 seconds

Start with the board touching the water, raise the board off the water (min. 6 inches), then lower the board to the water. Complete 5 controlled board lifts.

BODY POSITION

The key to wakeboarding is mastering the proper wakeboarding body position. The proper wakeboard body position is:

- Feet in a sideways stance to the boat
- Shoulders and hips should be lined up with the board and should NOT be facing the boat
- Weight centered between both feet; push hips over your front foot and roll your shoulders back over the back foot
- handle down and arms straight
- Knees bent with head up



Level 4 Steer back and forth in control inside the wakes

Start with the board touching the water, raise the board off the water (min. 6 inches), then lower the board to the water. Complete 5 controlled board lifts.

You obtain edge control of the wakeboard by rolling or applying pressure from edge to edge, placing weight on the heels or toes. To edge the board; first slowly roll (pressure) the weight onto your heels. This will cause the board to angle in the water. By releasing the weight on the heels, the board will flatten out and ride straight. This motion is done slowly and slightly. Cutting toeside is generally harder. Face the direction you are trying to go and push your hips over your toes to move in that direction.

Helpful
Tip

Helpful Hint: Keep your handle still and low and don't pull in on the handle.

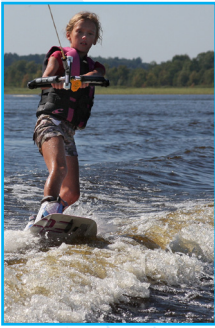


Level 5 Cross over to the outside of the boat wakes heel side only and return to the center of the wakes

Roll your weight to your heels and turn your hips and shoulders towards the wakes. Keep your knees bent and the rope tight; carve a smooth slow easy turn through the wake with the edge of the board. Make sure that you continue edging all the way across the wakes with your knees soft.



Helpful Hint: Do not cut hard and then let up, this will cause slack in the rope and make the board ride flat causing you to lose edge control.



Level 6 Leave the center of the boat wakes on toe side only and return to the center of the wakes

Once you are outside the wake from your heelside carve, you are going to come back into the wake going toeside. As you approach the wake toeside make sure that you put pressure on your toes while keeping your knees bent, arms straight and handle down. Slowly and smoothly carve the board toward the wake.



Helpful Hint: Make sure that you keep your direction constant when going over the wake.

Level 7 Complete seven wake crossings

Cross over the wakes seven times and remember to keep your knees bent and rope tight and low and stay in control of the board.



Level 8 Leave the center of the boat wakes on toe side, jump one wake heel side with the board clearing the water and land in the center of the wakes

To jump the wakes, you must first start with the proper set-up into the wake. Carve to the outside of the wake for a heelside jump, keeping the towrope tight and applying constant pressure on the edge or rail of the wakeboard. This is done by leaning against the towrope and boat with the whole body. Wait for the boat to start pulling back towards the center of the wakes. Start to angle the wakeboard towards the wakes and cut progressively, picking up speed as you approach the wake. This set up is called loading the line. Start with a smooth approach from only a few feet away from the wake. Keep the board pointed in the direction of travel.

With arms low and legs resisting, the wake will spring you up in the air. When landing the wake jump, the rider should keep his knees bent slightly and absorb the shock of landing with his knees.

Helpful Tip

Helpful Hint: : As you start to drop for the landing, take your back hand off the handle. This means if you are left foot forward you will hang on with your left and let go with the right hand, and vice versa.

Level 9 From the opposite side (toe side), jump one wake with the board clearing the water and land in the center of the wakes

The toeside will feel awkward at first and jumping this way is more difficult. It is not as natural as heelside. Put weight on the toeside of the board and use the same approach and landing as you did in the heelside wake jump. Make sure your whole body is facing the direction you are going. Lead with your front hip. This is the most important time to land with only one hand on the handle. Make sure that you really absorb the shock of the landing with your knees.



Level 10 Perform a surface 180

Slow the boat down to 12-15 mph. This will allow the board to slide easier on the water. The easiest place to learn this trick is in-between the wakes, right behind the boat. To initiate the surface 180, pull the handle and your rear hip together. This will slowly spin the board into the switch stance position. The turning of the wakeboard is a smooth and continuous motion.

Helpful Hint: Make sure that you keep your knees bent & head up!

Helpful
Tip



Level 11 Perform a surface 180 from fakie to front

You are going to follow the same steps as in Level 10. Bring your handle and back hip together. This should be done in a slow controlled movement. Make sure that you keep your knees bent, and head up.

Level 12 Perform a one wake heel side 180 rotation

Slow the boat down to 15-16 mph when teaching this trick. Start 5 to 10 feet outside the wake and set a nice easy edge towards the wake. When you've reached the peak of your height, you will start to rotate the board 180 degrees, as you did in the surface 180, keeping the handle into your body and towrope tight. In the beginning you only want to get approx. 6 inches of air. When landing in the fakie position, you want to keep your knees bent to act as shock absorbers and the handle at your hip.

Helpful
Tip

Helpful Hint: One of the most common errors is to start spinning too soon. Make sure that you wait until you are off the wake completely to start turning the board.



Level 13 Perform a one wake fakie 180 (half cab) rotation

Start 5 to 10 feet outside the wake and set a nice easy edge towards the wake. When you've reached the peak of your height, you will start to rotate the board 180 degrees, as you did in the surface 180, keeping the handle into your body and towrope tight. In the beginning you only want to get approx. 6 inches of air. When landing in the regular position, you want to keep your knees bent to act as shock absorbers and the handle at your hip.

To "jump" the wake you need to push down on the board by quickly extending your legs just before you hit the crest of the wake. This downward push will propel you into the air off the top of the wake. Remember to bend your knees again for the landing.

Helpful
Tip

Level 14 – Leave the center of the boat wakes on toe side, jump both wakes heel side with the board clearing the water and land in the on the outside of the opposite wake



Start from the center of the wakes edging out toeside across the wakes. This will put you in the position to cross both wakes heelside. Carve outside of the wake allowing you to get a few feet from the wake. Start to angle the wakeboard towards the wakes and cut progressively, picking up speed you approach the wake. Each time you attempt this try to get further and further out to allow more momentum to cross boat wakes. Keep the board pointed in the direction of travel.



Helpful Hint: Remember to make sure that you keep your knees bent and use them as shock absorbers. You may also want to shorten the rope at the beginning. As your jump gets stronger you can lengthen the rope.

Level 15 – From the opposite side (toe side), jump both wakes with the board clearing the water and land on the outside of the opposite wake

Put weight on the toeside of the board and use the same approach and landing as you did in the heelside wake jump. The intensity of the cut must stay the same or get stronger the closer you get to the wake. Do NOT let up off your edge. Really absorb the shock of the landing with your knees. Make sure you land with only your front hand on the handle. You should take your back hand off as you start to drop from the peak of your jump.



For additional information, go to
usawaterskiandwakesports.org or contact us at:
USA Water Ski
1251 Holy Cow Road
Polk City, Fla. 33868
Phone: (863) 324-4341
E-mail: usawaterski@usawaterskiandwakesports.org