

The

USA

WATER SKI &
WAKE SPORTS

Learn to
Kneeboard

Basic Skills

Challenge Series

Fifteen easy steps for you to progress from your first attempt to riding the kneeboard backwards



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Level 1

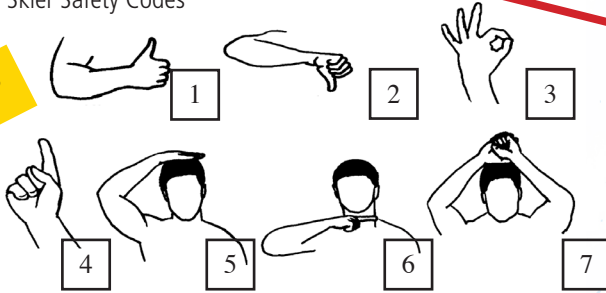
On land, demonstrate:

- The seven skier hand signals
- Placing feet in and adjusting bindings
- Holding the handle properly
- Proper body position for starting
- Proper body position while skiing

Explain five of the 15 Skier Safety Codes

Important safety rule:
Always wear flotation

Hand Signals



- 1. Speed up:** The "thumbs-up" gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed increased.
- 2. Slow down:** The "thumbs-down" gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed decreased.
- 3. OK:** If the set speed or boat the path is good, the skier may use the OK signal.
- 4. Turn:** When either the skier 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 skier 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 skier, driver or observer.
- 7. I'm OK (after a fall):** This important signal indicates that a skier is OK after a fall. It consists of both hands clasped over the head. It should be used every time the skier falls.

Water Skier'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 skis do not have sharp or protruding surfaces that could cut or scrape the skier. 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. Keep your ski tips up.

Rule 4: Do not ski 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 water ski 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 ski 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 ski.

Rule 8: Know and use the skier hand signals. It is particularly important to use the skier'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 one ski half way out of the water. This will signal to other boats that there is a skier in the water.

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

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

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

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

Rule 14: Always ensure that the motor is "off" when a skier is entering and exiting the boat.

Rule 15: Always have an observer in the towboat.

How To Properly Hold The Handle



Use the knuckles up grip except for certain advanced tricks.

Proper Body Position For Starting



On land, lie on the board and place your elbows where your knees will end up. Hold the handle and have a partner pull on the rope slightly to help simulate the pull of the boat. Slowly move your knees up the board until they touch your elbows. Do not move your elbows off the board until your knees touch them. At this point, rock your weight back on your heels and keep the handle into your body.

Helpful
Tip

Proper Body Position While Boarding

Helpful
Tip

When taking your elbows off the pad, be sure to immediately place your weight back on your heels, keeping your arms straight pushing the handle down.



How To Secure & Release The Velcro Strap



Helpful
Tip

The Velcro strap should be fairly snug. You don't want it coming undone on a fall, but you will want to be able to wiggle your body out of the tightened strap if needed.

Level 2 Kneeboard Starts

Complete a deep-water start and maintain the proper kneeboard body position for three seconds.

Start in the water lying on your stomach on top of the kneeboard. Have your weight back to keep the board tip up and pointed straight to the boat. Hold the handle on the front top of the kneeboard with both of your thumbs holding the Velcro Strap to keep it in front of you. Place your elbows where your knees will end up. Use your elbows to balance the board, and not your hands. When ready, signal the driver to begin accelerating. Slowly move your knees up to your elbows keeping the front tip of the board straight and out of the water by keeping your weight back and balanced. Immediately after your knees touch your elbows, rock back on your heels keeping your arms straight and pushing the handle low.



Helpful Tip
It is important to keep the front tip of your kneeboard in a straight direction pointing toward the boat using your knees for balance.



Practicing on land will speed the learning process!

Suggested Towboat Speeds

Approximate Weight Of Skier	Less than 50 lbs.	50 to 100 lbs.	100 to 150 lbs.	150 to or more
Boat Speed	5-8 mph	8-12 mph	12-16 mph	16-20 mph

Level 3 Kneeboard Balance

Maintain proper kneeboard body position for 20 seconds.

Place emphasis on the proper kneeboarding position with shoulders back with your arms straight and low. Secure your strap over your thighs by letting go with one hand at a time.



Level 4 Kneeboard Steering

Cut back and forth in control inside the wakes.

In steering the board towards the wakes, initiate each cut by turning your head and shoulders while using your knees to turn the tip of the board towards the direction you want to go. Place pressure (weight) on the back edge of the kneeboard in the direction you are cutting. For example, to turn right, put your weight on the back right side.



When cutting keep your shoulders back and bring the handle to the opposite hip of the cutting direction.

Helpful Tip

Level 5 Kneeboard Single Wake Crossing

Cross over to the outside of the boat wake on one side only and return to the center of the wakes.

In crossing over the wake it is important to start well away from the wake you are going to cross. Use the edging techniques discussed in Level 4 and continue your momentum up and over the wake. To return back to the center, point the board in that direction and hold the handle near the outer hip.



Helpful Tip

Turn the board slowly in the direction you want to go and gradually build speed to get over the wake. If you don't make it across, go back to the starting area and try again. Remember to not stop your momentum when making the cut. In returning to the center of the wake you will find it easier since the rope naturally moves behind the boat.

Level 6 Kneeboard Double Wake Crossing

Cross over to the outside of the boat wake on one side and cross both boat wakes one time.



The rope will help you get back to the center of the boat wakes. The momentum you build crossing the one wake will help you get across the opposite wake. Keep your weight on the back edge in your foot area. Point the board, head and shoulders in the desired direction and place the handle near the opposite hip of the cut.

Level 7 Kneeboard Double Wake Crossings

Complete seven wake crossing in 60 seconds or less.

Continue to emphasize proper body position using gradual turning at the far outside positions while keeping constant momentum from one side to the other.

Level 8 Kneeboard Tricks: Side Slide

Inside the boat wakes, perform and hold a side slide for five seconds.

The side slide involves turning the kneeboard sideways to the boat. Start directly behind the boat holding the handle in a palms-down grip. Swiftly use your knees to turn the board 90 degrees to the boat. Hold the handle near the hip closest to the boat. If you are cutting towards the wake you haven't completely turned sideways.



Level 9 Kneeboard Tricks: Reverse Side Slide

Inside the boat wakes, drop one ski and ride on the other for five seconds.

Shift your weight to one foot and lift the heel of your other foot from the binding. Slowly move the ski back with your toes pointed down. The water will pull the ski away.



If you are turning to the left, slightly lean back on your left hip and lift your right hip upwards keeping the right edge above the water surface.



Level 10 Kneeboard Tricks: Front to Back

Inside the boat wakes, perform and hold a 180-degree turn to the backwards position for five seconds.

The front to back turn involves turning the kneeboard to the backwards position with the tip pointing away from the boat. Start directly behind the boat holding the handle in a palms-down grip. Swiftly use your knees, hips and head to begin turning the board 180 degrees to the boat while simultaneously pulling in on the handle. Release the handle with the hand that is leading in the direction of travel. Continue pulling the handle to your lower back while twisting the handle downward toward your thumb, so that you will have both palms facing upward when you regrip the handle in the backward position.



Helpful
Tip

When in the back position, keep your eyes looking outward to the horizon, weight shifted away from the boat, and your handle close to the lower back. To return to the front position, just release the hand that last gripped the handle when going to the back position. For example, if you are turning backwards to the left, release the left hand to get in the back position. When coming back to the forward position, release the same hand and the board will swing back around to the front.

Level 11 Kneeboard Tricks: Reverse Front to Back

Inside the boat wakes, perform and hold a reverse 180-degree turn to the backwards position for five seconds.



When pulling in on the handle to make the initial turn, pull long and firm towards your hip. This will keep the line loose enough to make the turn. Do not jerk on the handle creating too much slack in the rope. If this happens, the skier will get a strong yank towards the boat when the slack becomes taut.

Helpful
Tip

Level 12 Kneeboard: Backwards steering

Inside the boat wakes, perform and hold a 180 degree backwards turn and steer back and forth several times in control.



Perform the 180 degree front to back turn (level 10) and hold the board in the back position. To steer the board for cutting, point the back of the board in the direction desired and move the handle from the small of your lower back towards the opposite hip from which you are traveling. For example, if you are backwards and traveling to your right, point the board to the right and bring the handle near your left hip. To go towards the other wake, repeat the process using the opposite instructions.

Level 13 Kneeboard: Backward Wake Crossing - In To Out

Inside the boat wakes, perform and hold a 180 degree backwards turn and cross over to the outside of the boat wake on one side only and return to the center of the wakes.

In crossing over the wake it is important to start well away from the wake you are going to cross. Use the edging techniques discussed in Level 12 and continue your momentum up and over the wake. To return back to the center, point the back of the board in that direction and hold the handle near the outer hip.

If you don't make it across, go back to the starting area and try again. Remember to not stop your momentum when making the cut. In returning to the center of the wake you will find it easier since the rope naturally moves behind the boat.



Level 14 Backwards Wake Crossing - Out To In

Cross over to the outside of the boat wake, in the forward position, and perform a 180 degree backwards turn and cross both boat wakes one time.

The rope will help you get back to the center of the boat wakes. The momentum you build crossing the one wake will help you get across the opposite wake. Keep your weight on the back edge in your knee area. Point the board in the desired direction and place the handle near the opposite hip of the cut.

Level 15 Kneeboard: Backwards Wake Crossings

Starting in the center of the boat wakes, perform a 180 degree backwards turn and cross over one boat wake, then back to the center going on across the other boat wake, finishing back in center of the both boat wakes.

Remember that momentum is your friend. Trust the proper directional position of the back of the board along with your handle placement and do not stop your cut until changing directions.

Congratulations!
You are now a kneeboarder!