

Wakeboard

From your first water start to rails and advanced spins. A structured cable wakeboard progression based on 5 levels. Track every trick you land.

by the Progresspedia community

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Getting Started

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Welcome to Wakeboarding

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: files.guidedanmark.org

Wakeboarding is one of the most rewarding board sports out there. Every session you feel yourself getting better, and every level in this guide gives you a new trick to chase. This course takes you from your very first water start through the core skills behind rails, spins and grabs, one small step at a time. The goal is to build a solid foundation you can use no matter what kind of rider you want to become.

Not everyone rides the same way, and that's the point. Once you have the basics down, you can shape your own style on the water.

Why you're going to love this

There's a moment, where it all clicks. You stop fighting the cable, your knees stop shaking, and suddenly you're just... riding. Water rushing under your board, wind in your face, the cable pulling you forward. That feeling is what keeps people coming back year after year.

What makes wakeboarding special is how visible your progress is. You can literally count your wins: first full lap, first switch ride, first kicker air, first grab. Every session has a clear "next thing" to try, and every level in this course opens up a new playground of tricks. You'll never run out of goals. Pro riders are still figuring out new variations after 20 years on the water.

A few things to keep in mind as you start:

- **Everyone falls.** The rider in the next lane landing clean 360s fell on the same water start you're working on today. Falls aren't failures, they're the fastest teacher you'll ever have.
- **Progress is personal.** Don't compare yourself to the riders around you. Compare yourself to the you from last session.
- **Small wins count.** A clean edge is a win. A smooth corner is a win. Holding the handle lower than last time is a win. Stack the small wins and the big tricks take care of themselves.

Now, before you hit the water:

Before you get on the water

- **Wear a life jacket** (CGA / ISO approved). Even strong swimmers should wear one, because a hard fall can knock the air out of you.
- **Wear a wakeboard helmet** once you start hitting obstacles (boxes, kickers, rails). From the 50-50 box onwards it's non-negotiable.
- **Check your bindings** every session. Snug, but not cutting off circulation.
- **Warm up.** A few minutes of shoulder, hip and knee mobility goes a long way. Wakeboarding is hard on the lower back and shoulders.

Falling safely

You will fall a lot. That's part of the sport. The rules:

- **Let go of the handle.** If you feel the fall coming, release the rope. Don't try to save it. Most shoulder injuries in wakeboarding come from holding on too long.
- **Fall loose, not stiff.** Relax, let the water take you. A stiff body slaps, a relaxed one slides.
- **Protect your head** with your arms if you're anywhere near an obstacle.
- **Stay still after a wipeout** until the cable or the rider behind you is past. Then signal to staff that you're okay.

The mindset

Progress in wakeboarding is not linear. Some days you land everything, the next session you fall on stuff you had dialed last week. That's completely normal. Celebrate the small wins like your first full lap, your first clean edge, your first 50-50, because each one is the foundation for the next trick. Film your rides when you can. Watching yourself back is the fastest way to fix what your body is actually doing versus what it feels like.

Now let's get you standing on water.

Water Start (Sitting)

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [Pareidoliac](#) · [channel](#)

Your very first cable wakeboard skill. It matters because everything else (edging, turns, obstacles) starts from getting upright on the water without fighting the line or catching an edge. A good sitting start teaches you to let the cable do the work (arms long, weight through the heels) instead of yanking the handle or standing up too early, which is how most beginners get frustrated.

Where this lesson fits: it matches small cable systems where riders go one at a time back and forth and staff can match cable speed to your level. Full-size cable parks on the other hand run a continuous loop at one speed with multiple riders on the line, and you'll need to do a dock start there instead.

How to:

Float in the water with the board in front of you, feet strapped in, knees bent toward your chest, and arms straight holding the handle. Let the cable take the slack. As it pulls, keep your arms extended and let it lift you, then slowly stand by pressing through your heels. Keep your weight centered and eyes forward.

This video explains it, where the wakebaorder is being pulled from a boat:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Pareidoliac](#)

Key tips

- Don't pull the handle toward you, let the cable pull you
- Keep your knees bent as you stand
- Look where you want to go, not down at the board
- Lean slightly back at first to avoid face-planting
- If you feel yourself falling forward, just let go of the handle and try again. No shame in a reset

Your First Turn

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [Algarve Watersport · channel](#)

After launching from the dock or starting in the water, the cable will pull you toward the first corner. The key is to stay calm and let the cable guide you. As you approach the corner, edge gently toward the inside of the cable path. The carrier will pull you around, so don't fight it.

Your first turn is (almost always) a **heelside turn**, where you face the cable with your heels digging in. Heelside is your natural side and the most stable carve in wakeboarding. It's how you control speed, catch up to the cable, and set up every obstacle approach later on. Getting a clean, progressive heelside turn is the key to everything that comes after.

Edge by leaning back into your heels, not by yanking the handle. The board will carve an arc by itself. The more you dig the heels, the sharper the turn. Keep the handle low at your front hip and your shoulders level with the water.

Here is a video demonstrating it:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Lagoon Watersports](#)

Key tips

- Stay low with knees bent through the turn
- Lead the turn with your hips, not your shoulders
- Handle low and close to your front hip. Never chicken-wing your arm up
- Progressive pressure: gentle at first, more as the carve develops
- Keep tension on the line, don't let it go slack

- Look through the turn, not at the water
- If the board washes out, you're leaning back with your upper body instead of pressing through the heels

Full Round

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [West Rock Wake Park · channel](#)

A full round means riding the entire cable loop without falling.

This is the milestone that separates absolute beginners from riders who are ready to progress. You need to handle every corner - starting from [your first turn](#) - and every straight section smoothly.

Most cable parks have buoys at each tower.

The colored buoys are used for taking turns, while the neutral buoys are used to finish your lap on the cable and signal to the operator that the next rider can start.

- **At a single buoy**, aim for the outside of the buoy to keep the handle and line tight. For a smooth turn.
- **At two buoys**, aim between them to maintain line tension and create the smoothest and most elegant turn possible.

On **2.0 systems**, cut hard out on your heelside and then stand up on a flat board while the cable slows down and begins pulling in the opposite direction.

If you are unsure, ask your operator or instructor for help.

Don't be surprised if the first few attempts end in the second or third corner.

The most common mistake while taking corners is failing to keep the rope tight, which creates a large amount of slack. When the line tightens again, riders often get pulled forward through the turn and crash.

The fix is almost always the same: keep a gentle edge, enter the corner with the line already tight and point your board in the direction you are going.

Full-size cable vs System 2.0: On a full-size cable, the loop is long, several riders share the line at once, and you pass every corner and straight in one go. A full round there is a real endurance and consistency test. A System 2.0 setup is usually a short two-tower line with one rider at a time. The lap is much shorter but the turn is much sharper, a full 180 degrees.

Key tips

- Always keep the line tight – slack leads to crashes in turns.
- Ride with a gentle edge and point the board in the direction of travel.
- Aim for buoys.
- Colored buoys = Turns
- neutral buoys = End of lap.

Dock Starts

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [JB O'Neill · channel](#)

At most full-size cable parks, you'll start every lap from the dock. The cable runs at a fixed speed and can't wait for you, so the dock start is the single most important skill for getting on the water reliably. Nailing it turns the scariest part of a session into the most routine.

There are two common variants: the sitting dock start (you sit on the edge of the dock and get pulled off as the line goes tight) and the standing dock start (you step off with the board already under you). Start with the sitting version. It's much more forgiving. Move on to standing once it feels automatic.

Here is some more information:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Start with the sitting version, graduate to standing
- Keep the handle low between your knees until the rope is tight
- Let the rope pull you. Don't lean forward or push off the dock
- Weight slightly back as the board touches water so the nose doesn't dive
- Look forward, not down at the dock
- Expect a few falls while you dial in the timing. Everyone goes through this

Toeside Turning

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [Lagoon Watersports · channel](#)

A toeside turn means pressing your toes down so the toe-side edge of the board cuts the water. You face away from the cable, which feels unnatural at first. It's harder than a heelside turn because the position is less stable and mistakes come easier. Rotate your hips toward the cable and keep the handle low near your front hip. At this level, avoid turning toeside on the approach to an obstacle or kicker. The toe edge catches the water more easily than the heel edge, and you can slam down hard.

Once your toeside turn is solid, a whole second half of the sport opens up. Every switch heelside line, every frontside spin, every toeside grab starts from being comfortable on this edge.

Learn more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Lagoon Watersports](#)

Key tips

- Rotate your hips, not just your shoulders
- Keep the handle low. Pulling it up will flatten the board
- Start with gentle toeside edges on straights
- Practice switching between heelside and toeside smoothly
- Think "chest open to the cable" so your shoulders stop twisting shut
- If you catch toe edges, you're leaning on the front foot. Push your back hip forward a touch

Straight Airs (S-Kicker)

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Your first real air! Approach the kicker on your heelside edge with moderate speed and flattening off right before going upon the ramp. As you go up the ramp, you should only have your lead hand on the handle. Keep your center of gravity low by slightly bending your knees. Spot your landing, bent your knees to absorb the impact and ride away.

The most common mistake.

- Is cutting hard toward the kicker
- Not flattening off right before it. This results in a crash, as it is not possible to hold an edge on an obstacle, only on the water.
- Too much weight on the front foot causes the nose of the board to drop and rider to crash. Avoid this by keeping most of your weight on the back foot. A 60–40% weight distribution.
- Using both hands. This is not necessarily a mistake, but it is a bad habit. And will most likely throw you off balance.

Here is some more information:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Aarhus Watersports Complex \(AWC\)](#)

Key tips

- Light to Medium edge into the kicker. Flatten out at the base
- Stay low at the top of the ramp, by slightly crouching.
- Land on a flat board with your knees bent and most weight on your backfoot.
- Look at the far side of the landing, not at the lip
- Only one hand on the handle while riding any obstacle

50-50 (Box)

Chapter 1 · Getting Started



Source: [John Haile · channel](#)

Boxes are flat, wide obstacles you ride across. A 50-50 means riding straight across the box with the board parallel to the feature - this is the most fundamental box trick. Approach straight with enough speed to clear the full box, ride up the ramp, and keep your base flat on the surface. The box is slippery - let the board glide.

Video with more explanation:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Julia Rick](#)

Key tips

- Approach straight, not at an angle
- Keep your base flat on the box - edging will catch and throw you
- Weight centered, knees slightly bent
- Keep your eyes on the end of the box, not your feet
- Arms relaxed, handle at hip level
- Ride all the way off the end before edging again
- If you find yourself sliding off the box early to the inside, build a little momentum away from the cable just before getting on. Once you're on, the cable will start pulling you back toward center.

Easy Tricks

Chapter 2

6 articles

Switch Riding

Jump Starts

Ollies

Side Slide

Side Slide 180

Indy Grab

Switch Riding

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: d25g0eo9v926iy.cloudfront.net

SwitchRiding with your non-dominant foot forward instead of your natural stance - the opposite of your normal riding position. means riding with your *opposite* foot forward. If you ride regular (left foot forward), switch is right foot forward. It's like writing with your other hand, clumsy at first, but half of every trick in this course depends on it. Almost every spin in wakeboarding lands switch, so if you can't ride switch, you can't land spins cleanly.

The good news: it's the same technique you already know, just mirrored. Start by doing a surface 180 and then keep riding in the new stance for a full straight. Do this every session until it feels normal - the goal is to ride a **full round** entirely switch.

Key tips

- Rotate your hips and shoulders into the new stance, not just your head
- Handle at your new leading hip
- Practice straight lines before attempting switch corners
- Most riders find switch heelside easier than switch toeside, so start there
- Dedicate at least one lap per session to switch-only riding

- It will feel sketchy for the first few sessions. Push through. The body catches up faster than you'd think

Jump Starts

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: [JB O'Neill · channel](#)

A jump start means launching off the dock with a small hop, landing on the water already in motion. It's cleaner than a regular [standing dock start](#), and it gets you past the wake of the last rider so there's less chop on landing. Jump slightly forward and outward from the dock as the cable pulls, absorbing the landing with bent knees.

Timing is everything. Jump too early and you get yanked, too late and your board digs in. Watch how the cable loops and sync your jump with the line going tight.

Key tips

- Time your jump with the cable pull, don't jump too early
- Jump forward, not up. You want distance from the dock
- Absorb the landing softly with deep knee bend
- Practice in both regular and switch stances
- Count the carriers passing the tower for a session or two before you commit. It makes the rhythm obvious

Ollies

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: [RIDERS App · channel](#)

Once you can ride a [full round](#) cleanly, ollies are the next building block. An ollie is a flat-water pop where you jump off the water using only your board and body - no kicker needed. Shift your weight to the tail, spring off the back of the board, and level it out in the air. This skill opens the door to ollie-based tricks and hitting obstacles from flat water.

Learn more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [RIDERS App](#)

Key tips

- Press the tail down first, then pop by extending your back leg
- Level the board out by bringing your front knee up
- Keep the handle close - it's easy to lose balance if your arms extend
- Start small and build height gradually
- Practice in both regular and switch stances
- Work on your timing by jumping over buoy before ollieing onto obstacles

Side Slide

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: [Shaun Murray · channel](#)

A side slide is a controlled sideways drift on flat water. While riding, turn the board 90 degrees so it's perpendicular to your direction of travel and slide across the surface. It looks simple, but it teaches two things you'll use forever: finding the balance point between your heel and toe edge, and keeping the handle locked at your hip through a rotation. Every surface spin and every box trick is built on this.

Start it by gently pressing through the balls of your feet as you rotate your hips. The board pivots, and the water does the rest. Don't force it. Side slides that come from the upper body will always wash out.

Drill it in both regular and [switch](#) stances once you can ride [full rounds](#) cleanly.

Learn more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Shaun Murray](#)

Key tips

- Initiate with your hips, not your upper body
- Keep the handle close to your center
- Flex your knees to stay balanced during the slide
- Practice both heelside and toeside slide positions

Side Slide 180

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: [Slowtrick](#) · [channel](#)

A side slide 180 combines the [side slide](#) with a full 180-degree rotation. Start in the side slide position, then continue the rotation to land riding the opposite direction (fakie or switch). This is your first full surface rotation and the template for every surface spin that comes later.

The hardest part is the handle pass. As you come around, the handle has to move from your front hip, behind your back, to your new front hip. If it stays in one hand and you try to muscle it across the front, the line yanks you over. Low and tight behind the hip is the move.

Key tips

- Get comfortable holding the side slide before adding the 180
- Commit to the rotation. Hesitation causes falls
- Pass the handle behind your back as you complete the turn
- Land with your weight centered and knees bent
- Do the handle-pass motion a few times on the dock before you try it on the water
- Start on a slack-free straight. A tight line makes the rotation smoother

Indy Grab

Chapter 2 · Easy Tricks



Source: [Julia Rick](#) · [channel](#)

The Indy is the first grab most riders learn. Reach down with your back hand and grab the toe edge between your bindings while in the air. It's the most natural grab because your back hand is already close to the board.

Try it first on a [straight air off the S-kicker](#). Once comfortable, add it to your L-kicker airs and FS180s.

See more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Julia Rick](#)

Key tips

- Tuck your knees to bring the board up, don't bend at the waist
- Grab between your bindings, not on the nose or tail
- Hold the grab through the peak of the air, release before landing
- Keep the handle close to your front hip with your other hand
- "Board up to the hand" is faster and safer than "hand down to the board"

Upper Beginner

Chapter 3

6 articles

Switch Corners & Full Rounds

Hard Edging

Straight Airs (All Stances)

50-50 (All Stances)

Method Grab

Frontside Shifty

Switch Corners & Full Rounds

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: media.jetcamp.com

Time to ride the entire cable park in [switch](#). This means handling every corner and straight section with your opposite foot forward. Once you can do full switch rounds consistently, your overall riding will improve a lot. Even your regular stance will feel more controlled. Riders who skip switch laps now will feel it later, because every 180 lands switch, and every Level 4 and 5 trick depends on the work you put in here.

Make it a rule for yourself: one full switch lap every session, no exceptions.

Key tips

- Dedicate full sessions to switch-only riding
- Corners will feel different in switch, so adjust your edge pressure
- Focus on smooth handle position through corners
- Don't revert to regular when things get scary. Commit
- Switch toeside corners are the scariest of the four. Give them extra laps

Hard Edging

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: cdn.shopify.com

Hard edging means digging into the water with real pressure and speed. This generates the tension and pop you need for bigger kicker hits and more dynamic riding. It comes after you can already ride [switch corners](#) and [full rounds](#) cleanly. Practice hard heelside and toeside edges in both regular and switch stances.

The thing that separates a hard edge from a lazy one is the line of your body. A hard edge looks like a line from your shoulders to the inside edge of the board, with the knees soft underneath. If you bend at the waist instead of leaning from the ankles, the cable takes over and pulls you back upright. Trust the line tension to hold you out there.

Key tips

- Drive from your hips and legs, not your arms
- Lean into the edge. Your body should be at an angle to the water
- Maintain handle position at your hip during the edge
- Build up progressively. Don't go full power until the technique is solid
- Practice hard edging into corners to maintain speed
- If the edge feels unstable, your back foot is probably doing too much work. Weight the front foot a touch more

Straight Airs (All Stances)

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: [kitesista.com](https://www.kitesista.com)

Now take your [straight airs](#) and learn them from every approach: heelside regular, toeside regular, heelside [switch](#), and toeside switch. Each feels different because your body position and edge angle change. Getting all four stances dialed is the real prep work for rotations. A 180 off a toeside switch approach is just a toeside switch straight air with a twist, so the air has to be solid first.

Key tips

- Toeside approaches feel less natural. Practice the edge first without the kicker
- Switch approaches are the same technique, just mirrored
- Keep the handle close to the hip of your leading hand in each stance
- Land each variation cleanly before moving to the next
- Pick one variation per session rather than trying all four. You'll progress faster
- Switch toeside is the hardest of the four for most riders. Save it for last

50-50 (All Stances)

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: images.squarespace-cdn.com

Once you have the regular 50-50 dialed, learn it in [switch](#), toeside approach, and switch toeside approach. Each approach changes how you pop onto the box and how your weight is distributed. The goal is to feel equally comfortable riding the box from any direction, because every box spin you'll learn later starts from one of these four approaches.

Key tips

- Switch 50-50 is usually the easiest next step after regular
- Toeside approach needs a different pop timing. Practice the approach without the box first
- Keep your base flat on the box regardless of how you got there
- Focus on clean ride-offs. Don't edge too early coming off the end
- On toeside approaches, the common mistake is over-rotating. Aim straighter than feels right

Method Grab

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: [THE WAKE CHANNEL · channel](#)

The Method is one of the most stylish grabs in wakeboarding, and the natural next step after the [Indy grab](#). Reach down with your front hand and grab the heel edge in front of your front binding. At the same time, push the board out away from your body. A properly tweaked Method looks incredible.

Best learned on heelside straight airs off the L-kicker where you have enough airtime to extend. You need the hangtime, because the Method is a shape, not just a touch. The grab has to happen, the board has to extend, and you have to pull it back in before the landing. Rushing any of those three steps is what makes a Method look like a scratch instead of a grab.

Learn more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [THE WAKE CHANNEL](#)

Key tips

- Reach across your body with your front hand to the heel edge
- Push the board out and away to tweak the grab
- This grab works best on heelside approaches
- Keep your back straight. The style comes from the board push, not from hunching

- Kick the front foot up to get the board horizontal behind you
- Start by just touching the edge. The extension comes once the touch is reliable

Frontside Shifty

Chapter 3 · Upper Beginner



Source: [Gerald Backmeister](#)

A shifty is a trick where you tweak the board sideways behind you in the air while keeping your upper body mostly facing forward. Start with a solid wake jump and good pop, then at the peak of the jump rotate your hips and legs so the board turns about 90 degrees behind you. Keep your shoulders stable and the handle close to your front hip, then untwist the board before landing and ride away centered over the board.

The header image depicts a rider during a [indy grab](#) while performing a frontside shifty

Key tips:

- Stay relaxed in the air.
- Don't over-rotate your shoulders.
- Practice [straight airs](#) first for better control.

Intermediate Tricks

Chapter 4

9 articles

Power Slides

Surface BS180

Tail Press

Backside Shifty

Backboard & Front Lip (Box)

FS180 (Box)

Kicker FS180 (S-Kicker)

Tail Spray

Nollie Starts

Power Slides

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [Julia Rick](#) · [channel](#)

A power slide is an aggressive sideways slide where you spray water by carving hard and releasing the edge. It's a [side slide](#) with style and power, and the spray is half the fun. Approach with speed, rotate the board 90 degrees, and press hard into the water to create a wall of spray.

The move depends on commitment. Riders who slow down halfway catch the edge and eat it. Pick a line, commit, and ride it out. It builds directly on [hard edging](#) - you need that level of edge pressure to throw real spray.

See more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Julia Rick](#)

Key tips

- Build up speed before initiating the slide
- Commit to the rotation. Half-hearted attempts catch the edge
- Press hard through your heels or toes depending on the slide direction
- Use power slides to set up power slide 180s later
- Do it on a straight with the line tight. Slack makes the slide wobbly

Surface BS180

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [WakeboomerTV · channel](#)

The backside 180 is a surface spin where you rotate with your back turning toward the cable. This feels different from the frontside version because the handle pass happens in front of your body rather than behind. Practice power slide 180s first as a stepping stone, and have your [ollies](#) and [switch riding](#) dialed before you commit to the rotation.

A lot of riders find the BS180 actually easier than the FS180 once they get past the initial blind spot. You can see the handle for most of the rotation, and the line stays in a more natural position across your body. The hard part is the first quarter of the spin, where you're turning your back on the cable and it feels like you're about to get yanked over backwards.

Learn more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [WakeboomerTV](#)

Key tips

- Initiate by turning your head and shoulders backside
- The handle pass is in front of you. Reach across your body
- Keep the rotation smooth and continuous
- Practice from both regular and switch stances

- Keep the handle low through the pass. High handles throw your balance
- Spot the water early in the second half to plant a clean switch landing

Tail Press

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

A tail press is a balance trick. You ride on just the tail of the board with the nose lifted high, holding the position with style before settling back to centred riding. It builds the board control needed for press tricks on boxes and rails.

The trick to a clean press is letting the cable keep you upright. If you try to balance on the tail purely with your legs, you'll wobble. Instead, hold a slight heelside edge so the line is pulling against you, then bend the back knee and lift the front foot. The tension stabilises the whole thing. Best practiced once your [full rounds](#) feel automatic - you need to let the cable do the work.

To commit to the press, fully extend the back leg, pull the front foot up toward your chest, and keep the handle low at your hip. It should look like you're sitting on the tail. Hold it for a beat, then shift back to centred riding and carry on.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Shift your weight gradually to the back foot

- Keep the handle close to prevent being pulled off balance
- Start with short presses and extend the duration as you improve
- Practice in both regular and switch stances
- Use a mild heelside edge for line tension, don't ride flat
- If the nose sinks, you're leaning back with your shoulders. Lift with the front knee instead
- Film yourself, because presses look very different from the outside than they feel

Backside Shifty

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

A backside shifty is a wakeboarding style trick where the rider twists the board and lower body backside while keeping the upper body facing mostly forward. The board moves sideways behind the rider without doing a full spin, creating a clean and stylish look in the air.

To do it from a kicker, approach with a relaxed edge and steady speed. Pop straight up off the kicker and stay tall through the takeoff. Once in the air, rotate your hips and legs backside while keeping your shoulders more square to the boat. Push the board slightly behind you into the shifty position, hold it briefly for style, then untwist your lower body to bring the board back underneath you before landing. Absorb the landing with bent knees and ride away centered over the board.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Backboard & Front Lip (Box)

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [Johnathan Buckhouse](#) · [channel](#)

Forward slides (backboard and front lip) build directly on [50-50s in all stances](#) - same approach, different exit. They mean riding onto the box and rotating 90 degrees so the board is perpendicular to the feature. A backboard (HS FS90) has you facing forward on the box. A front lip (TS FS90) has you facing the opposite way. Both require a controlled pop and rotation onto the box.

The rotation has to happen in the air above the ramp, not on the box itself. If you land with the board already sideways and a flat base, the slide takes care of itself. If you land straight and try to whip the board around once you're on the box, the edge will always catch.

Learn more in this video:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Johnathan Buckhouse](#)

Key tips

- Pop and rotate as you leave the ramp, don't rotate on the box
- Keep your weight centered once you're on the box
- Look at the end of the box to keep your balance
- Ride off the end and rotate back to normal riding
- Practice from both regular and switch approaches

- Approach angle matters. Go slightly wider than a 50-50 so the rotation has room

FS180 (Box)

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [reactionvm](#) · [channel](#)

A box FS180 means doing a [50-50](#) and rotating frontside 180 degrees off the end. You ride onto the box normally, then spin as you exit. Start with heelside 50-50 to FS180 off, then progress to toeside and switch variations.

Think of it as two moves back-to-back instead of one combined move. Ride the whole box in a clean 50-50, and only when you feel the tail leaving the end of the box do you pop and spin. Trying to set up the spin while you're still sliding usually ends with you falling off the side of the box.

Key tips

- Get fully comfortable with 50-50s in all stances first
- Initiate the spin at the end of the box, not in the middle
- The rotation comes from your upper body. Wind up slightly before the end
- Land [riding switch](#) with knees bent
- Keep the handle close through the rotation
- A small pop off the end gives you the airtime to finish the spin cleanly

Kicker FS180 (S-Kicker)

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [Raph Trinidad · channel](#)

Your first aerial rotation. Approach the small kicker like a [straight air in all stances](#), but initiate a frontside rotation as you leave the lip. Rotate 180 degrees and land [riding switch](#). The handle pass works the same as on a [surface BS180](#), just compressed into the airtime. Start with heelside approach, then progress to toeside, and eventually both in switch.

The heelside FS180 is the natural first one. The rotation flows in the same direction as your heelside edge, so the spin almost happens by itself if you commit. The key is separating the pop from the spin in your head. Pop first, spin second. If you start winding up before you leave the ramp, you lose the air.

In depth guide here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Raph Trinidad](#)

Key tips

- Get comfortable with straight airs first. This adds rotation on top
- Start the rotation at the lip, not before
- Spot your landing by looking over your shoulder
- The handle pass happens in the air. Practice the motion on flat water first

- Land with knees bent riding switch
- If you under-rotate, you need more pop, not more spin

Tail Spray

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [The Peacock Brothers](#)

A tail slide (also called a tail spray or tail butter) is an easy but great looking surface trick where you shift all your weight onto the tail of the board and slide along the water, throwing spray off the nose. It's not technically hard - the whole thing comes down to committing and carrying as much speed as you can. The faster you go in, the longer you hold the slide and the better it looks.

You only need basic board control before trying this. If you can [edge](#) confidently on both your heel side and toe side.

How to do it

The best place to set up a tail slide is right out of the corner, where you can carry the most speed. Hold your edge through the corner with lots of speed and keep edging away from the cable. Then shift all of your weight back onto the tail of the board and lean back. Get low and stay in that position - touching the water with your back hand gives you a bit of extra balance while you slide.

As you start to slow down, move your weight back over the middle of the board to release the slide and ride away clean.

See more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [The Peacock Brothers](#)

Key tips

- Set up right after the corner where your speed is highest
- Carry as much speed as you can - it makes the slide longer and look better
- Put **all** your weight on the tail and lean back
- Get low and stay committed in the position

Nollie Starts

Chapter 4 · Intermediate Tricks



Source: [The Peacock Brothers](#)

A nollie start is the next step after [jump starts](#) - instead of dropping off the dock normally, you pop off the nose of the board. It's flashy and builds nose-press control.

The trick is about separating your pop from your balance point. On a regular [ollie](#) you load the tail and pop off your back foot. On a nollie you load the nose and pop off the front foot. Most riders feel like they're going to slam face-first the first few attempts, so do it over deep water and commit to the motion.

See more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [The Peacock Brothers](#)

Key tips

- Shift your weight to the front foot as you drop from the dock
- Load the nose, then pop off the front foot - don't try to use the tail
- Keep the handle low and centered. High handles on a nollie-style pop feel really sketchy
- Commit to the motion over deep water - half-attempts are what cause the face-plants
- Practice in both regular and switch stances

Advanced

Chapter 5

7 articles

Ollie FS180

Kicker BS180 (S-Kicker)

Back Lip (Box)

Backroll

Kicker 360

Kicker Tantrum

Raley

Ollie FS180

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [WakeboomerTV](#)

The ollie FS180 combines a flat-water [ollie](#) with a frontside 180 rotation: pop off the tail, spin 180, and land switch. It's the first time you're spinning purely off your own pop - no kicker, no obstacle.

The skill it tests is initiating the rotation as you leave the water, not after you're already in the air. Pop first, spin second - but barely. If you wind up on the water you lose the pop; if you wait until you're airborne you under-rotate. Confident [switch riding](#) makes or breaks the landing.

See more here (translated audio but good tips):

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [WakeboomerTV](#)

Key tips

- Get a clean flat-water ollie down first. This adds rotation on top
- Initiate the rotation as you pop, not after you're in the air
- Spot the landing by looking over your shoulder through the spin
- Land with knees bent and ride away switch
- Confident switch riding is what saves the landing - drill it first
- Practice in both regular and switch stances (the switch version is a [surface BS180](#) with pop)

Kicker BS180 (S-Kicker)

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [JB O'Neill · channel](#)

The backside counterpart to the [kicker FS180](#). Same kicker, same airtime, but you rotate the other way, turning your back toward the cable as you leave the ramp. Most riders find BS180s feel more "blind" than frontside because you lose sight of the landing for part of the rotation.

Approach on a heelside edge exactly like a [straight air](#), then initiate the rotation from your back shoulder as you pop off the lip.

The trick to a backside 180 is not to try to cheat it early. Let your arm extend a bit while you're on the kicker and wait until you are completely off the kicker to initiate the rotation by pulling the handle to your front hip and then rolling it over to the small of your back as you are rotating. You want to stay crouched so you can keep your chest over your toes on the landing to ride away.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Get comfortable with straight airs off the S-kicker first
- A few good surface bs 180's first to get the handle control down
- Then get someollie bs 180's going to get used to the landing
- Initiate the spin at the lip, not before. Spinning early on the ramp kills your pop
- Lead with the back shoulder. The hips and board follow
- Look over your front shoulder to spot the landing

Back Lip (Box)

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [Lagoon Watersports](#)

A back lip (also called HS BS90) means approaching the box on your heelside, popping onto it, and rotating backside 90 degrees so the board is perpendicular to the feature. You end up facing away from the direction you came from while sliding across the box.

Back lips feel sketchy at first because the rotation puts you blind to the rest of the box. You can't see where you're going while you slide. The fix is to trust the approach: if you set up the angle right, pop cleanly, and land with a flat base, you'll slide across with the handle keeping you on line. Trying to look back over your shoulder during the slide usually throws your weight off.

More tips here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Lagoon Watersports](#)

Key tips

- The backside rotation feels different from frontside. You turn away from the cable
- Pop and rotate together off the ramp, not on the box surface
- Keep your weight centered once you're on the box
- Look at the end of the box to maintain balance
- Ride off the end and rotate back to normal riding
- The handle stays at your front hip through the slide. Don't let it drift behind you
- Under-rotating is safer than over-rotating. A 70-degree slide still holds, a 110-degree slide catches the edge

Backroll

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [Julia Rick](#)

The backroll is your first invert and the trick that turns "I do wakeboarding" into "I do wakeboard tricks." It's a heelside off-axis rotation off the kicker - not a true backflip, but a rolling rotation along the line of the board. Most riders learn it before any other invert because the kicker does most of the lifting; your job is to commit and stay tall.

The biggest technical point is staying tall through the pop. Bending at the waist to "throw" the rotation is the most common failure mode - it kills the lift and you land flat on your back. Approach with a progressive heelside cut, hit the kicker centered, and extend through your legs like you would on a [straight air](#). The rotation comes from your head and shoulders, not from folding your body in half.

Once you leave the ramp, drop your head back and look over your trailing shoulder toward the landing. Keep the handle low and pulled in to your lead hip - letting it drift up pulls you off-axis and you'll land sideways on your edge. As you come around, spot the water, soak the landing up with your knees, and ride away. Your first few will feel like a leap of faith; commit early in the cut so you're not half-in, half-out.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Julia Rick](#)

Key tips

- Progressive heelside cut into the kicker - don't yank the line
- Stand tall through the pop. Bending at the waist is what flattens the rotation

- Initiate by dropping the head back and looking over the trailing shoulder
- Keep the handle low and tight to the lead hip the whole way around
- Spot the landing as you come past vertical, knees soft on impact
- Don't grab on the first few. Get the rotation clean before adding style

Kicker 360

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

The 360 is your first full-rotation air and a true milestone trick. It's two 180s back-to-back, but it asks for a commitment that a 180 doesn't. Once you pass 180, you can't back out. Start on the S-kicker with a heelside frontside 360 (the "FS3"), which is the easiest variation because the rotation wraps around your natural heelside edge.

The key difference from a 180 is the handle pass. You pass the handle behind your back as you come around, then pick the rotation back up to complete the second 180. Many riders learn the handle-pass motion on flat water first, spinning two surface 180s in a row.

Expect your first ten attempts to feel terrible. The common failure modes are all fixable: under-rotating happens when you don't pop enough, over-rotating happens when you spin with your shoulders before you leave the ramp, and handle-passing failures come from letting the handle drift high. Film yourself after each attempt. The fix is almost always visible.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Dial in your [kicker FS180](#) and [kicker BS180](#) from both stances before trying the 360

- Wind up slightly on the approach. Load the rotation before you leave the ramp
- Handle pass happens behind the small of your back, low and tight
- Spot the landing around the 270-degree mark
- Land with deep knee bend. A 360 lands with a lot of momentum
- If you're under-rotating, you need more pop, not more spin
- Don't grab on the first few. Keep both hands near the handle until the rotation feels automatic

Kicker Tantrum

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

A tantrum is a heelside backflip. Off the wake it's a tricky trick because you have to "trip" your edge to get inverted; off a kicker it's much friendlier - the ramp does the popping for you, and your only job is to commit to the throw. It's most riders' first invert.

Approach the kicker exactly like a [straight air](#): progressive heelside edge, board flat at the lip, handle locked to the front hip. The whole trick is in what happens at the very top of the ramp. As your back foot leaves the lip, throw your head and shoulders back like you're trying to look at the sky behind you, and keep going. The rotation comes from the head and shoulders - not the legs. Knees stay tucked toward your chest. If you let them drop, you stall halfway and land flat on your back.

The single biggest mistake is throwing early. If you start the backflip before you're off the kicker, you kill your launch and under-rotate badly. Pop first, throw second - same separation as a kicker 180. Don't try to spot the water on the way up either; you can't see it. Look back over your trailing shoulder and the landing will appear late, as you come around.

Handle stays at the hip the entire rotation. There's no handle pass - you land regular, same hand on the bar, just upside down for half a second in between.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Key tips

- Have straight airs off this kicker fully dialed - the approach and pop are identical
- Progressive heelside edge in, board flat at the lip
- Throw the head and shoulders back as the back foot leaves the kicker, not before
- Keep the knees tucked toward your chest through the rotation
- Handle stays glued to the front hip - no handle pass
- Spot the landing late, over your trailing shoulder
- Commit fully or don't go. Half-throws under-rotate and land on the back
- If you're consistently landing on your stomach, you're throwing too early

Raley

Chapter 5 · Advanced



Source: [Julia Rick](#)

The Raley is the iconic "Superman" of cable wakeboarding - you load up an edge, release, and let the line pull you horizontal behind the board with your body fully stretched out. It looks impossible the first time you see it. The secret is that the cable does the lifting; your job is to build tension, release cleanly, and not panic.

Start a progressive heelside cut with arms tight to your ribs. Don't yank - let the cut build. Counting to 3 while building up the tension will help you know when to release.

When the line tension peaks, drive the heel of your front foot down into the water, the kick down should come from your *hip*, not the knee.

The hardest part is the release, it works in the same way as a rubber band or a slingshot. By pushing your front foot down and into the water from your hips you release the tension in the "Slingshot" that you build up by progressively edging harder

Here is a video guide:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Julia Rick](#)

Key tips

- Before attempting an air raley, being able to do a kicker raley is a very useful skill to have. It's not a requirement, but it definitely gives you an advantage in learning the air raley.
- Commitment from the very beginning, is a must learning any airtrick.
- Progressive heelside cut, arms locked to your ribs at a 90 degree angle. Count to 3 and then release.
- Drive from the hip - keep the back leg long and don't kick the board down with the knee.
- At max tension, sink the heel edge straight down like you're pushing a ball under the surface.
- Look up at the pulley as you release, not at the water
- To come back down pull the handle to your front hip, bend your knees on impact and ride away
- First attempts feel terrifying; commit early in the cut so you're not half-in, half-out

Most common mistake.

- Standing up straight right before the release. This is a very common mistake, but it removes all the tension that is meant to lift you up and out of the water. Stay on your heel edge as you release.
- Another classic mistake is bending the knees to "kick" the board down; that bleeds tension instead of converting it into lift. Keep the front leg straight, and push the edge from your hip straight down, and look up at the pulley.
- Trying to pull yourself up and out of the water with your arms kills the trick - the energy you built in the cut is what stretches you out behind the board. Once you're extended, spot the landing and pull the handle back to your hip to swing your feet underneath you.

Mastery

Chapter 6

4 articles

Scarecrow

Kicker heelside 540

Rewind Toeside BS180

Whirly Bird

Scarecrow

Chapter 6 · Mastery



Source: [Aarhus Watersports Complex \(AWC\)](#)

A scarecrow is a toeside front roll with a frontside 180 built in - you go in toeside and come out heelside, rotating forward and around at the same time. It looks far harder than it is. The kicker does the lifting and the 180 falls out of the rotation naturally, so once your toeside airs are solid this is a very achievable first toeside invert.

Before you try it you want a clean [toeside jump off the kicker](#) dialed in. It also helps a lot if you already know a front flip - off a trampoline or into the water at a pool - because the front-roll feeling is identical. If you don't have that, you can still send it straight on the water; just be ready to commit.

Approach with a medium toeside edge - not a hard cut, just a progressive one - with both hands on the handle. Right before the kicker, flatten the board off your edge so you hit the ramp flat rather than carving up it. At the top of the kicker, set forward and look under your armpit. That look is what initiates the front-roll rotation; chase your shoulder around and the spin follows your eyes.

Stay committed through the roll and let the frontside 180 come with it. Spot the landing as you come back around, bend your knees to absorb the impact.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [Aarhus Watersports Complex \(AWC\)](#)

Key tips

- Have your toeside kicker airs fully dialed before trying this
- Medium, progressive toeside edge - both hands on the handle
- Flatten off your edge right before the lip so you hit the kicker flat
- At the top, set forward and look under your armpit to start the front roll
- Let the frontside 180 come naturally out of the rotation - don't force it separately
- Spot the landing late, knees soft on impact
- Struggling with the roll? Go front hand only, initiate the roll, then add the back hand mid-air for the 180
- A trampoline or pool front flip transfers directly - practice it there first if you can

Kicker heelside 540

Chapter 6 · Mastery



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

The heelside frontside 540 is the natural next step once your [frontside 360](#) is on lockdown. It's the same trick from the start, just with one more 180.

In the air, rip both hands over to your rear hip — harder than you would on a 360. Reach around your back and pass the handle as usual, but here's the difference: instead of stopping like on the 360, keep pulling the handle all the way back over to your rear hip so your original hand can grab back on as soon as possible. That second pass is what carries you through the final 180.

On the last 180, spot your landing and get your chest over your toes. Bend your knees on touchdown and edge away from the cable so you don't slip back onto your butt — the most common way to lose this one.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Have your [kicker 360](#) and [kicker FS180](#) on lockdown first — big 180s with heavy toeside landings

- Same medium edge as your FS3, just slightly harder for extra height
- Rip the handle to your rear hip harder than on a 360, and keep it close to your lower back
- After the handle pass, keep pulling — don't stop like on the 360. Get the original hand back on fast
- Think 540 out of the gate. Never "360, then check, then add 180"
- Spot the landing, chest over your toes, knees bent, edge away from the cable

Rewind Toeside BS180

Chapter 6 · Mastery



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

A rewind is a trick where you spin one way, let the rope go tight, and use that tension to snap [abackside 180](#) in the opposite direction before landing.

Before trying it you should have a solid toeside [backside 180 off the kicker](#).

How to do it

The whole trick comes down to rope tension. Approach with a medium edge - a gentle edge feels nice but won't give you enough tension to actually rewind you. Flatten off about ten to fifteen feet before the kicker and go perfectly straight at it. Use that flat approach to pull yourself forward and get the handle into your other hand as early as possible - often you'll have it by the time you're three quarters of the way up the kicker.

Off the lip, unwind into your normal toeside backside 180, but push it all the way to 270, or just past your usual back one, so the rope comes tight again. Once it does, pause there in the air as long as you can and spot your landing below you. At the last second, just like a normal backside 180, rip the handle to your lower back, spot the landing behind you, bend your knees on impact, and ride away.

Full tutorial here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Key tips

- Medium edge in - too gentle and there's no tension to rewind you
- Get the handle in your other hand as early as possible
- Over-rotate slightly (to ~270) so the rope comes tight again
- Pause, spot the landing, then rip the handle to your lower back last second
- Bend your knees on impact and ride away

Whirly Bird

Chapter 6 · Mastery



Source: [JB O'Neill](#)

A whirly bird is a tantrum with a backside 360 mixed in.

Once the tantrum rotation is going, add the spin. Look over your rear shoulder to start the backside 360, and at the same time punch the handle all the way across your face. That handle punch is what makes or breaks the trick: if the handle stays out to the side, the line tension hangs you up and you'll never come around.

As you come around, still looking over your rear shoulder, you'll spot the water. Let the rope pull you the rest of the way, bend your knees on impact. Fair warning: the first few attempts will be a blur - unless you have serious trampoline or gymnastics background, you won't spot the landing right away. After a few tries you'll start to know where you are, and it gets easier from there.

The two classic failure modes are both about bailing halfway. The first is starting to look over the rear shoulder, freaking out mid-air, and snapping the head back straight - you end up doing a weird backside tantrum and the 360 never happens. Force yourself to keep the head turned until you're all the way around. The second is leaving the handle out to the side, which stretches your shoulder out and stalls the spin - the fix is the same handle punch across the face.

Watch more here:

■ [Watch on YouTube](#)

Video by [JB O'Neill](#)

Key tips

- Approach like a tantrum
- Last second, square your shoulders with the kicker and trip off the top into the backflip
- Look over your rear shoulder to start the backside 360 - and keep looking until you're around
- Let the rope pull you around, spot the water late, knees soft on impact
- Don't expect to spot the landing on the first tries - it's a blur until it isn't
- Head snapping back straight mid-trick = fear, not technique. Commit to the shoulder look at least once

Appendix

About this book

This book was compiled from Progresspedia, an open learning platform where anyone can contribute. Every article here was written, edited, and voted on by the community - the content lives as open markdown, free to read, share, and improve. Spotted a mistake or want to add something? Open the course online and suggest an edit.

by the Progresspedia community

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