

# Hooking It Up

## Efficient wake crossings start from the turn.

By Matt Rini

Are you one of those guys sitting in the boat watching your buddies ski and thinking, “If I could just ski shorter line lengths or speed up the boat, then the wakes would be flatter and I wouldn’t have such a hard time getting through them.” Boat wakes are enemy number one among most skiers, but with the proper instruction you’ll be well on your way to slicing and dicing your way through this liquid burden.

The two key elements of a successful wake crossing that we’re going to focus on here are what I call the “hook-up” and the “approach.” When you start executing these concepts properly, you will find out that smooth wake crossings are the result of proper technique and not just eliminating the wakes by shortening the rope or speeding up the boat.

### The Hook-Up

The hook-up starts when your reaching arm begins to retract; when you start to pull the handle back in to initiate the turn, make sure your lower body is turning at the same time. So many people pull the handle across their body and then the ski does not turn. Think of it like this — if your arm goes out to reach at the ball it has to come back in (retract).

This allows full rotation in the turn and keeps the ski out in front of you. For every inch your arm retracts with the handle, allow your lower body to move the same distance. You’ll know you’ve reached full rotation when your retracting elbow hits your rib cage. Leaving your shoulders level throughout the rotation will help your ski run under the rope easier before the boat gets away from you.

Now, with the ski pointed across the boat path and with two hands back on the handle, you’re ready to accelerate.



### **The Approach**

On your approach towards the wakes remain solid with your upper body. Allow your legs to crush a little to lower your centre of gravity, which allows maximum power and efficiency. Your main focus at this point is to maintain the strong and balanced position you created out of the turn. If your arms are getting separated from your vest and you're getting pulled forward, then you need to ride with your weight a little further back. If you're cutting through the wakes wheeling and the boat is pulling the tip of your ski down-course, then ride with more pressure on your front foot.



With a good hook-up and approach you'll be in a much better position to deal with the wake, rather than simply wishing it away.