

How to Hit a Rail by Mike Lieffers

Sometimes finding instructions on how to properly hit a rail or other obstacle can be difficult. These tips can help you out as it will attempt to explain the steps involved in hitting rails and obstacles successfully by adding a rhythm or tempo to each portion of a slide or combo-box session.

All riders hitting an apparatus for the first time, regardless of their riding level, should use their past experiences to create a plan. Rhythm, timing, and tempo become your greatest assets when attacking wake tricks and apparatus'.

Enough talk, you want to know how to start killin' it on your local fun boxes right? Well, lets start with the ollie. The ollie is used to get on some rails, but most importantly, it is used to get off a rail. It is important to have constant control of your ollie power. With this in mind, take time to ride around and practice the ollie: regular, switch, ollie to front-side 90 & 180 (switch), ollie to back-side 90 & 180 (switch), etc. Keep pushing yourself in new ollie positions.

Safety Basics

Step #1: Wear proper equipment: vest and helmet

Step #2 Check out the apparatus, look for: posts, nuts, bolts, nails, ropes, water depth, etc...

Step #3: Choose your boat operations: speed, distance, angle: towards or away

Step #4: Plan your entry: ollie, edge at apparatus, flat approach, cut back

Step #5: Plan your Escape: away from boat, towards boat, when you're on the apparatus should "away" or "towards" be used for escape?

Step #6: Boat driver & crew: turn towards rail on bail, turn away from rail on bail, when on apparatus should "away" or "towards" be used to assist the escape?

Rhythm or Tempo

Now that we have prepared a 'plan of attack' for the rider and the boat crew, it is time to use past experiences to help perform safely, effectively, and with some serious steeze. Hittin' apparatus' will give you many great memories.



This is where rhythm and tempo fit into your plan. Every individual, whether musically challenged or not, has an inner tempo that they tap their foot to, speak with, and basically move through life with. This is the starting point to finding your personal tempo that you will use on each individual apparatus.

Use the rhythm with your ollie power to find what works best for you. It may be slower or faster than your riding partners; don't worry! Think of a hit hop artist, each rapper has a certain speed and tempo that they use in their music; be it slow like 50 Cent, or fast like Busta, it doesn't produce a more or less effective track in the end.

Where to start?

I recommend beginning on a low flat ollie-on rail. When you ollie onto a rail, you have

more control on where the board is sliding on the rail. On up-ramp rails, the board kicks to board-slide and most new riders do not have a consistent placement on the rail, which hinders progression.

I hope this article helps beginner and advanced riders alike with planning your next session. Plans are what make consistent riders, and consistent riders become champions. For more information, please contact me any-time via WSWC or mlieffers@gmail.com.

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