

## Be Stylin'! by Sunni Anne Ball

When I was asked to write a "How to" article about wakeboarding it took me a while to come up with the right topic. I thought to myself: "What is one of the most important things I have learned about riding over the past ten years that I think other riders should know about?" Well, this is what I came up with...

### STYLE

Style has always been a part of wakeboarding. Everyone has their own style. Basically it's how good you make a trick look. Whether it's where you grab the board or just how high you go doing it.

Since I started wakeboarding there has always been an emphasis on style. My brother, Austin, taught me that it's not just about doing a trick, it's how good the trick looks. Being where I am today, I can't thank him enough for that piece of advice.

I spent two or three summers learning the basics; grabs and 180's. All that practice prepared me for eventually learning the more difficult tricks. Practice, taught me how to hit the wake properly and how to suck my knees up and grab the board. You see people starting to wakeboard now and the first thing they say is that they want to go upside down. All I can say to you is take your time; have fun, go super big, and grab your toeside and heelside wake jumps before you try going

upside down. It will make everything easier in the long run.

Grabs can sometimes even help you stabilize yourself in the air. On your toeside, if you find your self losing balance in the air and slipping out on your heels on the landing, try sucking your knees into your chest when you leave the wake, and using your back hand to grab the middle of the front rail of the board. For all of you who don't know, this is an indy grab. To this day, my favourite thing to do on a wakeboard is a toeside indy grab and poke it out in different ways or take it off axis.

I know nowadays when it comes to wakeboarding it seems to be all about the most technical tricks, but if you take a step back, style is what it is all about. A huge poked-out grab leaves an impression. Style takes time, actually it takes water time, it's almost like you have to earn it. The more time you spend on the water the more comfortable you get doing tricks. When you're comfortable, that's when you add your own style to your tricks to make them your own.

It's not the amount of tricks that I can do that has helped me progress so well in this sport, it's how I do the tricks. Style wins competitions. This is what I wanted to share with you. I hope next time you go wakeboarding you try going bigger than you ever have before and that you grab that board for as long as you can! Have fun and ride hard!



*Sunni Anne Ball is a member of Canada's National Wakeboard Team. She is currently Canada's top (and stylish...!) female rider, and is often on or near the podium at World Cup and pro wakeboard tour stops.*