

Wakeskating Hittin' the Rails by Jono Boysen

So you think you are getting pretty good at wakeskating? Have you tried hitting the rails yet? Well, maybe it is about time that you did.

The popularity of wakeskating is skyrocketing and the sport is ever changing. The key to hitting increasingly popular rails and boxes is all about your approach and your balance while on the obstacle.

I find the best way to prepare for rails is to use something cylindrical such as a PVC tube (as I am using in this picture). Take a rope and handle and tie it to something so that it resembles the height of your rope as if it were coming from a boat. Next, take your wakeskate and place it on the tube, practicing as if you were on a rail. Move around on the tube and play with your balance, shifting your weight from side to side. This will help you once you have ollied onto the rail and may need to correct your balance.

Practicing on the PVC tube is how I learned different techniques and gained more confidence in my sliding before actually attempting it on the water. The great thing is you can practice it anytime!

Now that you have practiced your balance on a homemade balancing beam, you need to move on to the next step and

tackle your ollie. The next time you get behind the boat think about coming into your ollie on a very subtle edge.

If you are going to be backside board sliding (your back is facing the rail), then you are going to want to pop up and pretend there is a rail there and shift your body weight from your back foot to your front foot. Let your body turn with the skate and remember to keep your body in the same position you practiced on the balance

beam.

Once you have mastered your ollie and you feel confident, you are ready to start hitting obstacles!

The most common mistake that is made when hitting a rail is having a bad edge on your approach. If you are coming in too hard and taking too sharp of an angle, then when you ollie you are most likely going to overshoot it and fall off the far side. If you come in too parallel to the rail, you will likely fall off the inside within the first few feet.

The best approach for the backside boardslide is to come in soft on your heels on a slight angle. Keep the board centered between your feet and look towards the end of the rail to spot your landing.

When you are ready to come off the rail, turn back to your regular stance and land with your knees bent to absorb the landing. I prefer to hold onto the rope with my front or lead hand. If you want to take your backside boardslide to fakie (landing switch) you will find it much easier to hold on with your backhand.



Wakeskating Hittin' the Rails by Jono Boysen

This article was designed for a beginner rail. Once you become a master on your first rail you might think of stepping it up and hitting a rail that is a bit longer. If you are going longer, your edge is going to be a bit harder and your angle may change a little bit.

Good luck!

Jono Boyson is recognized as one of Canada's top competitive wakeskaters. If you would like to further your wakeskate skills he runs a school on Lake of Bays in Dorset, Muskoka. Call 416 708 WAKE for more information.

