

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

The first things to think of when choosing the right board design for you are the rocker and the fins.

## ROCKER

Rocker refers to the curvature of a wakeboard. Essentially, it is the side view of the board. There are two basic types of rocker: *continuous* (a standard, unchanging curve), and *three-stage* (a flat section in the middle, with an angled section on each end – similar to a skateboard).

### Continuous Rocker

- Easier for beginners to learn on
  - Edges faster
- Jumps will go further across the wake

### Three-stage Rocker

- Easier to jump with
- Won't edge as smoothly
- Jumps will go higher

There are also *aggressive continuous* rockers, which are a blend between continuous and 3-stage rockers. If you're not sure what you want, a continuous rocker or subtle 3-stage rocker (subtle meaning a smallish flat section in the center) is always a safe bet. For bigger wakes or more height, more rocker (more curve to the board shape) is better. For smaller wakes, you want less rocker (less curve in the board).

## FIN SIZING AND PLACEMENT

*Fins* are what allow you to edge across the wakes. *Edging* refers to the technique of moving across the wakes by leaning away from the boat, and digging the edge of your board into the water. Because of fins, your board goes in the direction that you point it. This is referred to as *tracking*. The more tracking your board has, the faster you'll be able to edge toward the wake.

The more surface area a fin has, the more tracking it will provide. *Longer, deeper fins* will track more than shorter, shallower fins. *Shallower fins* can be 'broken free' (pushed out of the water, to slide the board around) more easily. Shallower fins will also separate from the wake sooner when jumping, which gives you more air time to do tricks and spins.

*Molded-in fins* are fins that are built into the board shape, and cannot be removed, whereas *bolt-on fins* are made of plastic or metal, and can be removed. Molded-in fins can be made shallower than bolt-on fins, but bolt-on fins are optional. Some fins are referred to as *cupped* – cupped fins can be either molded-in or bolt-on – these fins are always towards the edge of a board, and the inside is concave. This means they have more surface area than a non-cupped fin of the same size, and will track more. The closer that fins are to the edge of a board, the more tracking they will provide while edging across the wakes – allowing you to go faster.

*Centre fins* (fins that are in the middle of one end of the board) allow the rider to move across the wake without even having to truly edge – with a large centre fin, you can just point the board to the side, and you'll move in that direction. Centre fins are a good learning tool for beginners, but on most boards they should be removed once the rider is comfortable riding and edging, in order to develop a good edging technique.

# BOARD SIZING

When getting a wakeboard, you have to pick a board that's the right size for you. Although ideal board size depends on the board style (e.g. wider boards can be ridden in a shorter length), here is an approximate chart to figure out what size board to choose:

<b>Rider's weight</b> (lbs)	Up to 80	Up to 115	Up to 130	Up to 150	130 - 180	150 - 190	160 and up	180 and up
<b>Board length</b> (cm)	120	128	131	133	136	138	140	144

As a general rule, longer boards will provide more stability and easier landings, and shorter boards will be more maneuverable. For beginner's boards, it's a good idea to choose a longer board.

# BOOTS

Boots, also called bindings, are what keep you connected to the board. Boots should be comfortable, but should also provide support.

## THE RIGHT FIT

If you can't get your foot into a binding without binding slime (lubricant), don't worry – that's normal for many boots. Your wakeboard boots should fit snugly. You shouldn't be able to move around inside them, or lift your heel without lifting the heel of the boot.

They also shouldn't be so tight that just having them on hurts your feet or is uncomfortable. The best way to get a perfect fit is to just try a on a lot of different boots.

## STIFF VS. SOFT

A stiff boot will allow you to control the board more accurately, because moving your feet will immediately move the board. A soft boot will be more comfortable, and allow more flexibility for difficult grabs. If you're not sure which you want, even after trying some boots of varying stiffness, just go with something in the middle – not too stiff, not too soft.

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT

Before going wakeboarding, make sure the bolts which attach your boots to your board are tight – especially if you drove with the board, which can rattle the screws around and loosen them. Never wax your board. Leaving your board out in the sun will make the graphics fade – If you want to keep your colours bright, keep the board in the shade.

# ROPES AND HANDLES

Using a ski rope for wakeboarding is not okay. For wakeboarding you need a non-stretch line, or at least a low-stretch line. Having a line that stretches caused a slingshot effect that can make the pull unpredictable. Also, a non-stretch line allows you to build tension on the line, which is essential to getting air and landing certain tricks. Wakeboard handles are 15" wide, about 4" wider than ski handles. The extra width gives better control, stability, and makes it easier to keep the handle in at your hip. It also makes it much easier to pass the handle behind your back for spins.

# BOATING TIPS



# DRIVING THE BOAT

For beginner wakeboarders the boat should be driven around 16 mph. For riders who are jumping, try to drive in a straight line as much as possible, because riders can't jump when the boat is turning. Ideally, you should drive a straight "pass" for as long as your lake allows, then turn and return down the same pass, in the other direction. Repeat when you get to either end. This pattern allows you to avoid the rollers (waves) caused by your boat.

# BOAT WEIGHTING

The more weight is in the boat, the lower it sits in the water, and the larger the wake will be. Fat Sacs are a good way to add weight – they come in many shapes, and fill up with water to provide a bigger wake. If one of the wakes is white-washed at the length were the rider is, move more weight to that side. A good way to deal with that is by having a small cube shaped fat sac in the boat, which can be moved side to side easily, and means the passengers don't have to switch seats. The weight in your boat should be about 60% in the back, and 40% in the front – but, this varies a bit for each boat, so experiment to find what works for you.