

# The Secret To The Cheek Out

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If you love barefooting, but hate the start, then this article is for you. People are always asking what the secret to the cheek out is. They often say that they have trouble getting that “edge” on the water, or get stuck in the middle of the wake. These problems are so common, that I actually have yet to meet a barefooter who has *not* struggled at first with this portion of the front deep. Fortunately, with a little elaboration and a nudge in the right direction, your dilemma can be easily solved. Let’s get right to it!

When setting up for a perfect cheek out, something that will really help you during the maneuver is remaining tight. You want to squeeze your butt so it can have a firm plant on the water. This should not be hard to accomplish, as you will need to be straight and stiff for the front deep anyway. Just keep this squeeze from the time the boat starts moving until you are settled in the smooth shelter of the curl, keeping a constant pressure on the rope with your feet. Try to keep in mind that your body *is* the ski. This should help you grasp the concept of the entire cheek out. Also, to put your body in the proper shape and add a little more weight to your rear, you are going to want to sit up until you are riding on your tailbone, which again, is already part of the front deep. Be sure not to use the handle to pull yourself up, but crunch your abdominal muscles to lift your back. This will really help you get a good edge for slicing toward your destination.

Now that you are positioned correctly, you are that much closer to a seamless cheek out. The biggest thing you need to think about now is really making sure that you start your cut early. This step cannot be stressed enough because if you don’t get an edge on the water right away while it is soft, it will be too late to get any drive and you will get stuck

in the wash. We all know that getting spanked by the wake is not very fun. The best way to ensure an early cut is to start to lean in the direction you want to go as you start sitting up, digging that same butt cheek into the still-soft water. This should be well before the stern roller hits you. Do not be afraid to cut through this starting bump, because it will actually make the impact a bit softer. As long as you have the handle in tightly to the pelvis, it won’t affect the cheek out. Using the leading hand, keep constant pressure on the handle to hold it down on that spot.

Now that you have a good “edge” on the water and are past the stern roller, you should be well on your way to the curl. Be sure not to let off your lean until you are sliding down the side of the wake. It is very frustrating to come so tantalizingly close, just to get pushed back to where you started. In the event that this does happen, don’t waste time leaning the same way. Bank off the wake from your first attempt and use the momentum to go out the opposite side. Similar to the first, another common letdown is actually

getting into the curl, but drifting out so far that you drift back into the turbulence of the wash. The quick fix to this is to simply lean the opposite way once you are over the hump at the peak of the curl to slow yourself down and settle in place. Again, just make sure you are over the hump before doing so.

After you have reached your desired location, all that is left to do is stand up! You can now ski away every time, without a sore backside or a lack of confidence. As you become more consistent with this start, your boat driver will be able to takeoff more quickly. This will enable you to cheek out with greater speed, and allow you to stand sooner. Less time riding on the butt equals more time standing on your feet!

*Keith St. Onge’s Barefoot Ski School is located in Winter Haven, Fla. For more information, visit [ksobarefoot.com](http://ksobarefoot.com), call (863) 887-0039, or e-mail [reservation@ksobarefoot.com](mailto:reservation@ksobarefoot.com). Whether you are a serious tournament skier or you just ‘foot for fun, all levels are welcome! Sponsored by: MasterCraft, Vortex Wetsuits, Gopal’s, US Gear and Clincher.*

