

Breaking Through A Plateau

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Unfortunately, progression does not always come easy in wakeboarding. Like most sports, the learning curve is really fast at first, and starts flattening out over time. If your skill level is stuck on a plateau, there are some simple drills and habits that will help you break through and progress from one year to the next.

- Avoid the bad habit of doing every trick in your same old routine before trying anything new. While there is a balance between consistency versus learning, I have seen so many riders who are reluctant to try a new trick until they first go out and land every other trick they already have in their bag. By the time they do all this, they are typically getting tired out and do not have much energy to work on something new.

- **Set your goals high**, but do not overlook the building block tricks in wakeboarding. For instance, most riders want to learn a backroll, but skip learning 180s, toeside airs or backside spins.

- **Think of five tricks** you would like to learn, and start working toward that goal each set. Take baby steps toward landing your goal trick. For example, if you want to learn a wake-to-wake Heel Side 180, make sure that you practice Ollie 180s, Butter Slide 180s, and 1 Wake 180s first.

- **Ride more.** For me, taking one set when I wakeboard will maintain my level of riding, but taking two sets each time I go will get me to progress. While some wakeboarders are blessed with a natural talent, the rider who is persistent will excel in the long run.

- **Do not over-try one trick.** While it is good to buckle down on trying something new, do not work on the same trick your entire set. Just try it five times each time you ride and move on. I have seen a lot of riders, especially on learning their first invert, start

to get close to landing and try the trick over 20 times each and every time they go out. Fatigue always sets in, preventing them from landing their goal trick, and their riding starts to suffer in other areas from being too focused on one thing.

- **Ride with a coach**, or at least someone that is better than you. A good coach will quickly be able to see what drills you need to work on, and help you break habits that are standing in the way of learning. And just riding with or watching people that are better than you will motivate you to go out and try the tricks they are doing.



Austin Noring (pictured) is a long-time coach at the Gordy Bubolz Wakeboard Camp.

- **Ride in a Tournament.** When you are entered in a tournament, you will typically ride more in preparation for the event and build consistency. After the event, you will be excited to try new moves that others in your division were doing. Check out USAWATERSKI.org for information on local tournaments this summer.

Gordy operates the Gordy Bubolz Wakeboard Camp, which is sponsored by Fort Fremont Marine, Correct Craft, Smith, Ten-80, and BI-Fly High.

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