

# Coaching

## Preparing for the sea

Set-up your board with the belt and at the beach in soft sand or without the skegs in sit in the board and try on the belt. Make sure it's easy to buckle by loosening the Velcro and then buckling and then tightening the buckle. Test the fast release mechanism and ensure that clothing (baggies - surf shorts) don't get caught restricting the quick release.

Take the waveski to a calm area of water without waves to test the buoyancy and balance and safety exercises.

Getting onto your waveski is like mounting a horse, pull yourself up onto it lying across the middle and then throw your leg over and sit up with your feet in the water. Keeping your feet in the water improves stability. Now buckle your belt and then with feet still in the water start paddling and as momentum is gained place your feet in the straps. That's how easy it is. When at rest if you feel unstable take your feet out the straps.

Practice paddling around to get your balance sorted out then turn over in shallow water and open your eyes to orientate yourself underwater. Your eyes in the sea may sting a little from the salt but soon they will get used to it.

Try leaning back against the board and sticking your head out the side while upside down so that you can breath. Some people panic at the thought of being strapped in and upside down underwater. This simple exercise will build confidence that even strapped in you can breath. Release the belt and turn the board up right and mount it and practice your Eskimo roll. (Covered later)

## Â Entering the sea

When you're comfortable with paddling the board, take it to the nearest surfspot with mellow waves that is not crowded has no rocks or strong currents and preferably a lifeguard on duty. Move away from anyone else so that they and you cannot injure each other. Remember it takes less than three minutes to drown, so safety must always come first. We have no records of a waveski surfer drowning and we want to keep it that way.

Using a life jacket is not advisable when using a belt as it causes the belt to get stuck and provides extra floatation that when upside down and strapped in pins you to the board. Also with extra floatation waves will drag you further causing you to loose your breath.

Never place the board between you and the deep sea, always keep it at your side or toward the beach. This will avoid the wave hitting the board into you which is a common beginners mistake and can be a painful one to learn. If the waves are big at the shore (should not be for your first attempt) lift the board over waves still to your side using the footstraps and belt.

Start first in the shallow water where you can stand and get on easily by hitting on the board like woman of old rode horses and then carrying your one leg to the other side. At about waist high water get on and paddle toward out a couple of meters.

Try catching small white-water waves in front. Get tumbled and when upside down release your belt once the wave has let you go. Never unbuckle while the wave is dragging you, remember its energy is being dissipated every second and unlike a river, it will let you go. If you unbuckle in the wave the board will carry on being dragged away and might damage your ankles if it twists, plus hit someone else paddling out.

## Â Paddling out

Because the surf is small! You should be able to paddle to the backline (point where waves start to break and surfers wait to catch them).

As a white water wave (broken, frothy and turbulent) approaches you lean back just before it reaches you and ramp over it. Bigger waves are more difficult but possible and balancing on the other side is the skill. With under buoyant boards you end up with your back in the water, nose in the air and this is called 'tail walking'. Lean forward and paddle yourself parallel.

If a clean faced wave is about to dump on you as you are paddling out, turn upside down. Never turn your back to the

wave at that moment as a wave is powerful and will hurt you.

If the wave starts breaking as you get to it, hold the paddle like a battering ram alongside you, lean forward and punch through the clean face of the wave. Keep the paddle perpendicular to the wave and low so it does not hit you in the head. A common mistake is trying to lift the paddle over the wave resulting the wave catching it and the only type of injury from equipment hitting you that you can get.

Stand up surfers often get speared by their own boards or fall on the skegs. With a waveski you are strapped in and at one with your board. If a stand up surfer wipes out in front of you beware of the surfboard flying at you, and if it's a possibility turn over quickly. Note that It is impossible to punch through white water waves and if a big one approaches you turn over, do not turn your back to it.

Never paddle out through the 'line up' which is the place where surfers wait to catch waves. Paddle out on either side of the 'line up' leaving a wide berth for safety and also not to ruin the riders wave.

If you are paddling out and someone is riding a wave that will intersect with you, paddle hard to get over the wave and out the way. Always maintain one direction so that they know what your intention is and if you have a choice of paddling over the clean face but getting in their way, don't, rather head for the white water so that they can safely surf past you and enjoy their wave. You will appreciate the same courtesy. If you are caught in the 'inside' (where the waves are breaking) it's your problem and not theirs, you can always head to shore and the paddle across and out.

#### Â Riding waves

Once at the backline keep your the nose of your board (front) pointed out to sea at an angle and keep your eyes out to see scanning for approaching swell that will break as a wave. By looking and pointing out to sea you minimise being caught by a big set wave. Waves are generally the same size or smaller that break at the backline but rogues come through and 'clean up the backline' meaning it washes everyone in.

Select a wave that has no one else riding on it, if they are riding toward you and you 'drop-in' they will be annoyed as it is according to surf rules their wave. Wave selection is an art and what you need to identify are waves that peel in toward the shore and that don't dump in one go 'close out'.

Whilst taking your first waves you will not be concerned with this, as the adrenaline rush of even going straight down the wave that 'closes out' will be phenomenal as you accelerate ahead of the wave and experience the roller coaster to the shore. Lean back as you approach the bottom of the wave so that you do not 'nose dive' on 'take off'.

Riding along the face of the wave, away from the white water is the objective as the clean faced wave is like pure oil compared to the white water which is like washing powder foam. On a clean face you glide along in harmony whereas in the foam you bounce around like 4wd in the bush.

Once you've got this far, you're ready to try turns that will keep you on the clean face of the wave.

#### Â Eskimo Roll

Tired of climbing on to your waveski every time you wipe-out? Save your energy for surfing the waves, not swimming around with your ski - learn how to "ESKIMO ROLL".

This will get you back into the action with the least waste of time and allows you to roll under the big waves that may stop you reaching the backline. Learn how to roll as soon as you can - it will make a huge difference to your confidence and all-round surfing performance.

All you need is a seatbelt to strap you into your seat, some calm water (swimming pool, lake or flat day at the beach) and a little bit of practice. Make sure that you use a proper Waveski Seatbelt, obtainable at your local surf shop. DON'T use any old belt and buckle such as diving belts, because they may jam under tension and prevent you releasing from your board.

Â