

5 Pro Tips for Starting in Tow Sports

Zenon Bilas is a seven-time U.S Barefoot water-ski champion, but he knows a thing or two about getting up on logs too. He's been an instructor for over 30 years and teaches all over the world. He gave us five coaching keys that help get someone up on two skis, a slalom ski or a wakeboard the first time.

1 Use an experienced water-ski driver and have an experienced skier in the water next to you. The driver will ensure a solid pull, while the expert in the water can help you maintain position as the boat begins to accelerate.

2 Use the correct boat speed. For two skis, this will be 25 mph or slower, recreational slalom 28 mph or slower, and wakeboarding 15 to 20 mph.

3 Tools can make learning quicker. Holding a boom attached perpendicular to the boat makes starting much easier. If that's not available, attach your line to a ski-tow pylon, or for more upward pull, use an extended pylon or tower.

4 Choose equipment appropriate for your size and skill level. A heavier adult may

want shaped skis with more surface area, while teens may want shorter sizes that fit their weight.

5 When you're not skiing, read magazines, watch videos and ride in the boat to observe water-skiers and riders of all skill levels. You'll learn good technique, and probably learn from others' mistakes.



▶ Captain's Test

(ANSWERS FROM P. 21)

- 1 C. "Hit it!" is recognized as the universal phrase for starting a run.
- 2 B.
- 3 A.
- 4 C.
- 5 C. Many skiers paint the underside of the ski bright orange to be more visible.

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