



GETTING OUT wannabe a Wavesailor

“Get out in the right place, at the right time and in the right way”

PHOTO: garylawn.com

Forging ahead with his fully frontside series, this month **Jem Hall** assists and inspires you to get out the back in readiness to catch a wave...

As a wise wavesailor once said (and no, it wasn't me), "You've got to go back to get in front". With this piece of pure, distilled wisdom firmly in mind, let's look at the best ways to get out the back in one piece and in prime position to get some sweet rides in. I say "in one piece", but really what I mean is getting out in the most efficient and effective way possible. This will mean you have more energy to apply in actively jumping and riding the waves you target, seeing as you are, most definitely, a pilot and not a passenger.

Your most simple targets here are to choose the right route out, launching at the right time, and performing the right technique. Let's use our tried and tested formula to get you out the back with knowledge and power...

who?

The people who get out the back have determination, fitness, observation skills, and have chosen the right kit. They also sail with their hands relatively close together and resist humping the rig like a randy dog. They will head up or bear away to ease their passage via the easier bits of swell or waves. They may even walk up or downwind with their kit to launch from a more suitable place (shock-horror!). Lastly, they may drop out of a waveride before the ride is over to give them an easier passage out back thereafter.

what?

This concerns two subjects. Firstly, water knowledge, which can be developed through surfing / SUPing. Getting out the back means getting to a place where the waves are no longer breaking but just rolling as swell. Out the back will often be in deep water, where swell doesn't form into breaking waves (though this will change according to the swell size and direction, wind strength and direction, and tidal height). The swells that you see out the back come in sets of two to maybe even seven or so, and these sets need to be observed and timed. When you are out the back you're at the 'bus stop,' but more on that next time...

Secondly, the kit that you choose has to get you out the back – but it must also allow you to ride on the way in. As your getting out skills are in their infancy you should take bigger boards (but not too over-finned) and have enough power in your sail. When you're getting more competent you have to be more proactive and take smaller kit so you can smack the lip on the way in, dude! Bigger kit isn't as loose, so the better you are at getting out on smaller kit the sweeter the ride on the way in.

why?

You WANT to get out the back so you can be in the best place possible to catch the best and most suitable wave in and enjoy the most amazing part of our great sport – waveriding. If you can't get out you can't get in, and on the bigger days if you don't go then you won't know just how sweet it is. On top of the skills above you can also add the need for speed. Not only planing speed, but also semi-planing speed or even a decent wobbling speed. Waves come in at different speeds, and the more you meet that speed then the more likely it is that you'll get over them. So, to get over big sections the deal is to speed up, and in good time, in readiness to meet the water's power.



***WAVE SPEED** – The speed of a swell... can be calculated by multiplying the swell period times 1.5. For example, a swell or a wave train with a period of 20 seconds will be travelling at 30 knots in deep water. A swell with a period of 10 seconds will travel at 15 knots. Individual waves actually move twice as fast as the wave train or the swell, and a single wave's speed can be calculated by multiplying the swell period by 3. So individual waves with a period of 20 seconds travel at 60 knots in deep water. Again, think of the wave train like a rotating conveyor belt that is also moving forward. – www.surflife.com/surfology/surfology_forecast2.cfm

ABOVE: Sweet long flat jumps over white water will ease your route out the back
BELOW: Get the sail open and forward and pop that nose over
PHOTOS: Clark Merritt SoloSports





GETTING OUT

please get into the rhythm of the ocean by counting and timing the sets. Going out when a set has just broken means you'll only have a few white water waves to get over, but in the breaking zone it will be relatively flat. Your first sessions on this should be on smaller days and with bigger boards to ensure that you actually get out.

If you've balled this up and are faced with a huge set, let common sense prevail and bang in a chicken tack or gybe, head back to the beach and go for it again when your path is easier. If you're coming in and have taken the last or penultimate wave in a set, then you're thinking ahead as your next route out will yet again be easier. Taking the first wave means you get a good 'washing' if you fall in, and then on your way back out you'll get the next set 'on the head', giving you plenty of time for some front crawl practice. Catch the right wave in the right place to get you right back out there for more of the right waves.

where?

The ferocity of breaking waves will be different in different parts of the break. The best scenario is that you can see a deep-water area, called a channel, with an outgoing rip where there are smaller breaking waves. The rip transports all the water coming in with the waves back out to sea, so it can also be used as your very own conveyor belt. Again, you learn more about this by going surfing / SUPing (and yes, I coach this in Ireland). Getting to the rip may require you to walk or sail up or downwind to reach it and reap the rewards. It may also mean you drop off your waveride to get to the channel to ease your next passage out the back, thereby ending your day with a higher wave count. Watch or follow good wavesailors, as the chances are that a lot of them will also be using it to get out more easily.

when?

By now you should be able to smell those nice clean swells gagging to be picked up at the bus stop, so let's look at the timing of your run out. To get out easier you need to ensure you go at the point when breaking waves in the impact zone are at a minimum. This will occur just after a big set has passed, and often means you must launch as a set has just finished breaking. So

Bigger boards are a must for onshore conditions as the wind can drop on approaching the waves. Cross-off winds will give you the best riding. You can head up between the waves and then, on the approach to a wave, you must bear off to hit it square on (very important in all wind directions). Cross-off winds in contrast to onshore winds will give you a surge in power as you go up the face, and then it will be less as you drop down behind the wave.

In all wind directions you'll need to make quick decisions to choose the right route out, so it's important to keep looking ahead and making a plan. Make sure you reflect on your experiences, as you'll be continually drawing on them.

After gauging the wind and your boardspeed, look ahead and check to see how far away the next obstacle is. If you've lost speed and can't get planing you'll need to assess if you have the time and power to get planing in both straps. If so, do it – and quick. If not, then get out of the straps and get your feet wide apart with your front foot next to the mastfoot and pointing forward as you keep low over the good old bent back leg.

The technique is similar out of the straps to in them – you need momentum, so give the sail a few pumps for a bit more speed. Then push down on the back leg as you come back on the board and pull up on the boom while sheeting out. All this will lift the nose and assist you in wheelie-ing over the white water. You will have lost momentum, so you need to get power again by moving your head forwards and in and extending your arms out and forward to catch the wind.

Stay low and stay dry. Right kit, right route, at the right time and executed in the right way. All right, geezer?

wannabe a Wavesailor

The sequence below was shot in Punta San Carlos, Baja, Mexico. It's cross-off, 5.2-5.8 Ezzy Panther weather and I'm on the RRD twin fin 90. The waves are shoulder to logo-high, have very clearly defined sets, and are a total joy to ride, so I want to get out the back quick and easy to catch my next bus.

1. I'm powered up okay but not well powered, so I have to keep on it here as I will have to do this a couple of times and I don't want lose too much momentum. After getting down low (more than I am here, check my SUP shot) and unhooking I have ensured my front hand is back on the boom and my arms are relatively close together. This makes me more sensitive and gives me that all-important power I need once over the wave. I have started to kick the nose up by extending the back leg. We have to hit the wave square to present the least amount of board to the wave to help us get up and over it.

2. From my unhooked, over-the-board stance, I sheet out and lean back slightly so I can lift the board's nose. The white water will

hit the board's underside and lift me up and over. Pointing directly at the wave will present the least amount of resistance and ensure you actually get over these bigger lumps.

3. As I climb over the white water I will have lost momentum, so to get power back in the sail I have extended my arms to get the rig forwards and upright. I will also have contracted my core to maintain balance. All the ollie-ing with the legs has seen me climb proficiently over the wave.

4. The power in the sail is still low here so I sheet out and scissor my legs to keep the board on track, once again keeping low over a very bent back leg. The white water is turbulent, aerated and offers little float, so I move my head forwards and in – for if you stay low you stay dry and you will get out the back.

5. The rig continues to be thrust forwards. This is no time for bench-pressing and humping the sail! Pulling the sail by bending both arms does F-all. Right then, heads up and what's next?



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next month...

We will look at what waves to catch and how to do this.

HALL'S HOMEWORK

Wavesailing involves being unhooked a lot – so get planing quicker unhooked, pump EFFICIENTLY to get planing and get into both straps before you hook in. When jumping, unhook earlier and get good at sailing fast unhooked. Yep – if you are low you will go!

In smaller waves do shorter runs in and out and tack or gybe onto set waves as you start to figure just where 'out the back' is and where exactly this damned 'bus stop' is. When it's bigger get right out the back, check out the swell, and get on the right bus at the right time and in the right place. (All this and more is in my great DVD, 'Winner to Wavesailor – plug, plug!')

PHOTO: Clark Merritt SoloSports – Following some big wise baldie can lead you to take a better route out the back

client corner

"It's hard to get out! Getting over the white water is a skill not anticipated by many. Go with it and go fast as it really does help. Learn those long but low jumps while landing planing to keep momentum.

"Learn the break. Learn where the green waves are and learn where the white water is. Stay close to the peak, but whatever you do, don't be tempted to ride that one wave all the way back to the beach. Getting back out over green waves is infinitely easier than tackling their white-water colleagues."

– Gary Lawton