



SHOW ME SOME AIRTIME



wannabe a Wavesailor

Fully rested after a month off, **Jem Hall** is straight back into his frontside series as he gets you having it on some frontside aerials.

ABOVE: Tail up, look forwards and land in front of the wave.
Photo: Gary Lawton

Now that you're hungry for some real progression in your riding and your all-out attack on the lip you're about to launch into one of the best moves there is: the aerial. The feeling you get when you connect with a good section and boost an air off it as you fly in front of the wave and look back towards the beach is amazing. I should know, as between you and me I'm going to let you into a little secret... I've only been doing some half decent ones in the last couple of years. There – I've said it. But now I've 'fessed up and come out of the closet I'm on a motivational mission to inspire you to do some aerials – and there's no better way to get the positive vibes across than when yours truly is fully fired up and working super-hard on something himself.

On my 2009 Baja trip I just fully went for it, and after an hour a day getting worked on this and many moves I got my aerials moving forward and in front of the wave. Added inspiration also came from my clients' unbridled passion and commitment to the cause.



SKYE HIGH

Over to **Skyeboy**, who isn't shy of huge aerials on both tacks and all sorts of trick mayhem off-the-lip, thanks to his early schooling in freestyle.

"I think the conditions are really critical to learning aerials. If you get some nice cross-offshore conditions it's pretty easy to get speed down-the-line and boost a little air. The further the wind turns towards onshore, the harder it can get.

"For improving airs the biggest thing for me was really bottom turning into the lip. For years I would go pretty straight and basically jump off the lip, but I remember one trip to Maui where I really concentrated on bottom turning hard and coming up underneath the lip. When you connect with the lip heading straight up at it and more vertically it's a great feeling – probably the best ever.

"When it's more offshore always wait a bit longer than you think. Firstly, because the wind is blowing up the face the impression is that the wave breaks earlier, but it's just a bit of spray. Secondly, it's harder to get in front of the wave when it's offshore, so you really need the power from the lip to get some projection. The later you hit it the more power it has to punch you in front.

"When it's more onshore I tend not to think too much about actually doing an air. Just head up nice and vertically with good speed as if you're just doing a hard-hitting smack. If you get the timing spot-on then the wave will flick the tail up and around. With this style it's easier for tweaking the tail out a bit too."

John Skye

Photo: RRD / Darrell Wong



THE MOVE IS DEPENDENT ON:

Wave selection

Speed down-the-line

Timing

Jumping competency (on both tacks)

Your timing when hitting the section will improve as you work on getting more vertical in your ventures up and at the lip. As you get more wave time you'll enhance your psychic powers to predict when a wave will break. The timing of your run-up to hit a section, accept its energy, jump and project you and your kit to land in front of the wave will become much more refined. This is, after all, essentially what an aerial is. Of course, there will be times when instead of you hitting the lip it's the lip hitting you, but this is all part of the fun. If you don't go, you just won't know.

The best conditions are definitely in cross or cross-off winds, and you want to make it easy at first by keeping your line high and along the wave where the energy is. So it's a bit of a speed run along the wave and then a direction change to jump off the section you've been eyeing up.

The more vertical you go in your bottom turn the harder you make it for yourself as your timing has to be spot on, so take our suggested line for your aerial to make your connection and land back in front of the wave. As you progress, because you believe you will, you can go more vertical when your timing and aeriels get better.

The key tips for this move are speed and timing. If you go faster the board is better able to release from the wave, and you can be more aggressive and hit the section a bit later. Then with good timing you can use all of the energy the wave has to offer you. This move is great fun and scary enough to get that focus we all need and want. Enjoy!

“Fear causes hesitation, and hesitation will cause your worst fears to come true”

Bodhi in 'Point Break'



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

HOW TO...

This sequence was shot in cross-off winds and head-high sets at PSC, Baja, on a 5.8 Ezzy Wave Panther and RRD Freestyle Wave 100. I wasn't planing on the way out, but was getting good speed on the wave when coming in (around 11-15 knots of wind).

1. Get in position upwind on a set wave. Look for a nice section coming towards you so you can land on the smooth bit in front of it and use its energy for lift-off. Get plenty of speed and make a mid-face bottom turn.
2. Look at and aim to meet the section as it's just about to throw out. Just before you hit the lip change your rails from toeside to carving on your heelside as your body begins to move outboard in readiness for the airtime.
3. Look back towards the beach to assist you in changing direction, as in a top turn, to land in front and not behind the wave. Do it more than I am here and begin to slide your hand back up the boom.
4. As you're connecting go into jump mode by extending your back leg to lift the nose and take off while pulling the rig back. The section will be pushing on the underside of your board to assist you.
5. Now you're really concentrating to finish your redirection from the section and thinking 'long, floaty jump' as you look forward to spot your landing in front of the white water. So come on then baldy – less glare and more action please.

6. Once airborne get into a nice compact in-flight stance. Pull your tail up and scissor your legs as you push back down on your toes to fly the board better (great tip from our test editor, Adrian Jones).
7. Aim to land just in front of the white water. The better your in-flight stance and smooth tail-first landings are, the higher your chance of claiming it. Brace yourself ready to control the fin should you get stuck in the white water. Whoop-whoop! Now, where's the next section?

As we said earlier your timing is important, so if you're going out the back of the wave or crashing in the white water then you must concentrate on these tips:

- Make sure you're changing your direction just before take-off. Go from heels to toes and look back to the beach to do this.
- After take-off, fly the board through the air to maintain forward momentum.
- Ensure you hit a good section and perhaps hit the lip later.
- If it goes really wrong and the wave is hitting you rather than you hitting it, a) get more speed so you get more projection, or b) you're just going too late so go earlier.

You can put all of these beatings (opportunities to improve) down to experience, so get out there and pop some aerials.

SEQUENCE: Clark Merritt / SoloSports

CLIENT CORNER

Aussie **Martin Batstone** really went for it on his aerials (amongst other cunning stunts). He had great timing thanks to his surfing background, and got into some outrageous positions that he didn't always finish but still went for anyway. Over to him:

"Wave selection – cross-off is much easier and you need to find a wave that's sectioning: i.e. a section further down-the-line breaking in front of you.

"It's very important that you don't do your usual bottom turn / top turn combo because it's hard to get aerials coming vertically up the wave, as you would in a top turn. Unless of course you're really good (better than me).

"Take a more horizontal line across the wave at full speed towards the section you've spotted.

"Aerials are all about timing, so hit the corner of the breaking section and project up and forward in front of the wave.

"Bring the back hand forward and look forward to stop getting blown out the back.

"Stay small and pull up your back leg so you don't look like an aerial starfish.

"Land and claim it!"

RIGHT: Martin B enjoying his surf-style aerial. *Photo: Gary Lawton*



HALL'S HOMEWORK

Hit some aerials dude, both front and backside, and if conditions don't facilitate this then just do some tail-up jumps to ensure you're ready to pull your tail up in your aerials. Jump both ways so you can do aerials both ways, and always be all over your fundamental skills. The higher your wind range, planing very early and sailing crazily overpowered abilities are, the better the wavesailor you will be!

Oh yes, and sail one-handed, front hand off, so you can be ready for some freed-up top turns.

JEM'S BRAND NEW WAVE TECHNIQUE MOVIE 'WINNER TO WAVESAILOR' IS READY TO PURCHASE NOW, AND FOR ALL YOUR FUNDAMENTALS THERE'S 'BEGINNER TO WINNER'

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next month

We will embrace the one-handed top turn.

RIGHT: Free up those top turns and feel the joy.
Photo: Dave White

