

# Water Skiing and Wakeboarding Safety



*Water skiing and wakeboarding are popular water sports that are fun and can contribute to physical fitness. Unfortunately, thousands of water skiers and wake boarders are treated in emergency departments across the United States every year. It is important to learn what steps to take to be safe before you head out onto the water.*

## Injury Facts

- The most common water skiing injuries are sprains and strains.
- Legs are injured the most often while water skiing.
- Cuts are the most common wakeboarding injury.
- Head and face injuries are the most common for wakeboarders.
- Wakeboarders are more likely to have a traumatic brain injury than water skiers.

## Safety Out of the Water

Before water skiing or wakeboarding:

- New participants should be trained on how to get up out of the water and how to safely use the tow rope.
- Make sure to go over basic hand signals with the spotter.
- The boat operator should be licensed and should be experienced with the boat and the body of water.

## Safety In the Water

- Only water ski and wakeboard during the daytime.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket.
- Always wear an approved safety helmet when wakeboarding.
- Always have a spotter sit at the back of the boat to watch the skier and communicate with the boat operator.
- Immediately let go of the tow rope when you fall.
- Make sure the propeller of the boat has stopped before getting back into the boat.
- Stop water skiing and wakeboarding as soon as you hear thunder, see lightning or know a storm is coming.
- Do not water ski or wakeboard in restricted areas.
- Do not use drugs or alcohol while driving a boat, water skiing or wakeboarding.