

## **Chapter 1: Skim faster, and Get out further**

One Step, Monkey Crawl, Stance, and Timing.

Also Included: Tricks, A Couple Helpful Tips, and Choosing the right board

**When I started skimboarding,** I started from the very bottom. I used a cheap \$40 wooden board from a tourist souvenir shop, Threw the board upside down and way out in front of me and wondered why I didn't go anywhere... but let's not talk about that. Let's talk about what TO do, and help you skim out further, reach waves faster, and start skimming waves back to shore.

### **The Perfect Approach to Skimboarding**

Skimboarding is all about transferring your momentum to the board as smoothly as possible and reducing as much drag as possible in order to carry your momentum as far and quickly as possible to catch a wave. To do this you will need to use the timing of the ocean, practice a controlled and centered stance, and learn the perfect skimboarding drop.

### **Beginner Mistakes (how not to bust your ass first try):**

You may be well past this, but just in case....

1. Don't throw the board and chase it:
2. Don't JUMP on the board with both feet at the same time or front foot first.
3. Don't approach the board from the side.

### **Holding the board:**

Your "hold stance" should be a 9-5 position. The board should feel balanced. This allows the board to drop even and flat when placing the board in front of you while running.

### **Dropping the board:**

Your goal is to place the board just in front of you while running, so that your first step onto your board is your back foot. The board should never be thrown way out in front of you or place right under you. You want the board to be just far enough in front of you so that you can lunge onto the board in a smooth, back foot first, stepping motion after taking just one step when dropping your board.

### **Approaching the board:**

Never approach the board from the side. This is a common mistake and sure fire way to slide out and bust your ass! Let's try to avoid that by approaching the board from the back, between 6 and 7 O'clock – just at the corner of the tail of the board (left or right, depending on your stance) .

## **One Step**

### **Walking onto the board – Back Foot First**

Ideally, you want to WALK onto the board, BACK FOOT FIRST. There are a few select professional skimboarders who have perfected a front foot first drop – among other unique drops like a “no step” - but leave that to the pros. A back foot first, One-Step drop, is the safest, most controlled, and speed efficient approach to getting onto the board. So let's get to the one step....

### **The One-Step Drop**

The one step drop is the safest and most efficient way to transfer your momentum to the board. When I first started skimboarding, I did not one-step. I had to teach myself the rhythm and it wasn't easy at first. I practiced on my carpet floors at home, and then perfected it in the water. Perfect Timing in good to perfect shorebreak will be nearly impossible to obtain by running and chasing your board. The one-step rhythm may be difficult at first, but when you figure it out, it just feels right and makes sense. The One-step method is going to allow you more speed and momentum out to the wave by giving you more running and setup time on your board, especially in timing-sensitive shorebreak spots. So let's get to it.

### **One Step Rhythm**

If you are Regular: While running, you are going to drop the board in front of you on your right step, take your ONE step with the left foot, so that the next step is your back foot first onto the board.

If you are Goofy, you are going to drop the board in front of you on your left step, take your ONE step with your right foot, so that the next step is your back foot first onto the board.

**Syncing the swing** rhythm in your arms as you run may help you with the one step rhythm.

For Regular footers: your arms will swing forward as your right foot is stepping hard back and your left foot is lunging forward.

For Goofy Footers: your arms will swing forward as your left foot is stepping hard back and your right foot is lunging forward.

### **\*TIP\***

Take your time. Start in slow motion and on dry sand to get the rhythm. When you think you got the rhythm, move to wet sand. Gradually try to go faster and faster. As you start dropping at higher speeds, you will be placing the board further in front of you and taking a bigger lunge onto the board.

## **The Monkey Crawl**

The Monkey Crawl drop is a highly effective tool in carrying your momentum as far as possible, and getting that extra boost of speed and distance. I get a lot of people asking me how to do the monkey crawl and how I learned how to do it. I first started doing the monkey crawl, by running in thigh deep water and crawling onto the board as I ran next to the wave just for fun. I quickly realized that this allowed me to run in deeper water, and lunge my weight onto the board in deep water rather than trying to run onto the board back foot first in thigh-waist deep water. Now, I do the monkey crawl when I want to get that extra couple steps and extra speed when skimming in weak conditions, or when I am water dropping in fast powerful water rushing up the beach.

### **Holding the board**

You will want to hold you board similar to normal, but choked up a little bit higher to give your front and back leg room when crawling onto the board with your hands still on the board. So maybe 10 and 4 instead of 9 and 5 position.

### **One Step Rhythm**

You will still be getting on the board back foot first and using a similar rhythm as your one step, however the board will still be in your hands as you take your final step and lunge onto your board.

For Regular Footers: You will take your final step with your left foot, lunging hard onto the board with your right foot. Your hands will move from grabbing the rail, to flat palms as you place the board onto the water and simultaneously step back foot first onto the board.

For Goofy Footers: You will take your final step with your right foot, lunging hard onto the board with your left foot. Your hands will move from grabbing the rail, to flat palms as you place the board onto the water and simultaneously step back foot first onto the board.

### **\*TIP\***

You can practice the Monkey Crawl on the wet or dry sand, but keep in mind that the monkey crawl will be most affective on water drops and deeper water since you will not need to bend down as far to put the board down. Monkey Crawl drops onto the sand will require you to bend down very low, and may actually slow you down. This is why I only Monkey Crawl when doing water drops, and one step on sand drops and in shallow water-drops.

## Stance

A solid, strong stance is very important in reducing your drag in the water and holding your speed and momentum. You want your feet just a little more than shoulder width apart. Keep a nice bend in your knees but keep your back straight. A lot of people make the mistake of bending at the waist and leaning over their toes. This is an easy way to go off balance. Stay low, strong and centered over the board as if someone was going to come over and try and push you off the board. Be sure to not to be too heavy on your back foot.

I always recommend buying an indo board to help you learn to center your weight.

## Timing in Shorebreak

Timing shorebreak is one of the most important aspects in skimboarding, and is something that is going to come with time and experience in the ocean. In places with powerful and perfect shorebreak, timing is everything. You can be the fastest runner in the world but if you're timing is off you will never reach waves at the right time, or at all. If you have great timing, and a good centered stance, you will be sliding far and skimming into waves.

When to drop the board:

Ideally, you want drop the board as the water has drawn all the way out to wet sand. The other option is going to be dropping as the water rushes fast up the shore – this is a water drop, and is usually performed when trying to slide out to far waves or into siders. Running and dropping on the water as it is rushing up is also a good time to use the monkey crawl as you can drop a little bit later, and lunge your weight onto the board as the water is rushing up.

Now that you are focusing on the breathing motion of the waves moving up the shoreline, and then sucking back out, You will want to match this up with the next wave that is coming in. You want to go for a wave that is holding up long enough for you to get to it before it is broken, yet you want the wave to be peaking up enough to where it will still give you push. So **in a nutshell, you want the motion of the shoreline surge to match up with the next wave coming in.**

There's nothing more frustrating than a beach with great shorebreak, but the timing of the waves and shoreline surge just doesn't match up. Ultimately, perfect timing will come with practice and experience in the ocean.

## **\*Tips\***

**Balance Board:** mastering a balance board (like an indo board) is a great way to know that you are able to center your weight comfortably and effortlessly. If you are struggling to stay balanced on a balance board with ease, it is likely that you are going to be creating a lot of drag when skimming out to waves.

**Photos/Videos:** Ask someone to take photos or video of you with a camera or a phone. Watching yourself is one of the best ways to improve your technique. It will be easy to see where most of your drag comes from, critique your stance, and see what you can improve on next time.

### **Choosing the right board:**

A cheap, wooden, resin coated, board is not going to get you anywhere in skimboarding, except learning to drop and step onto the board – if you're lucky. There are lot's of options when choosing a skimboard, but by far the best decision you can make is getting a Carbon Skimboard from a credible skimboard manufacturer. Choose a board that has plenty of surface area, and is the right size for you. You can find all the top brands and prices on boards by visiting [www.eastcoastskimboards.com](http://www.eastcoastskimboards.com) - receive a %10 discount on your entire purchase by using my discount code AK10. If you can't afford a Carbon board, then save up and purchase a Carbon board. Carbon boards are important in improving your skimboarding skills. Carbon boards are more stiff and lighter in weight. Stiffness is important because it reduces flex in the board, which reduces drag, and ultimately help you slide out further and longer. Carbon boards are also very durable and last much longer. A simple chip or ding in the rail won't mean game over for your board either. Having a lightweight board means more responsive turns and loftier airs. But super lightweight isn't as important until you are at a very advanced level in your skimming. If you absolutely cannot afford a carbon board, and don't want to wait until you can, then there are other material options. But keep in mind, it will be very possible you may be going back online to buy a carbon board because your skills have outgrown the cheaper option, or the cheaper board has already broken down in a matter of months.

I personally get a new board about every 4 months. Although the bottom and rails seem to be in great condition, and may still be in very usable condition for someone who is not at an advanced level, I notice the stiffness and pop slowly disappear in the board and am ready for the responsiveness and stiffness of a new board.

## Tricks

### 360

The 360 is perhaps one of the most basic trick of them all. However, if you are at an intermediate level and instantly pass a 360 as too easy of a trick, try seeing how controlled you can get your 360 in deeper water and while still carrying plenty of momentum to hit a wave or pop an air. If you are a beginner and just learning your 360s, try the following: After stepping onto your board, while you still have plenty of speed, crouch low enough to drag your back hand on the water/wet sand. Make sure to keep your balanced centered so you don't catch a rail while spinning around.

### 180 shuv-it

with a solid and centered stance, bring your knees to a slight bend. As you jump up, make a scissor motion with your legs, using the toes in your back foot to flick the board around as if you were kicking sand behind you with your back foot. Do not let the motion affect your stance. You want to be engaged and bring your stance back to normal as the board finishes its rotation and you land back onto the board.

Placing your back foot further back will create more POP in your shove it. Bringing your back foot further up on the board (by the front of your tail pad) will create a quicker rotation with less pop.

### 360 Shuv-it

Performing a 360 shuv is going to be similar to your 180 shuvit technique. However, this time you are going to focus on more hang time. Don't feel like you have to flick the board 10 times harder. Give it just a little more flick, but focus more on your hang time. I often have to tell myself this when doing 540 shuv-its – As much as I instinctually want to flick it super hard, I try to tell myself to flick it maybe just a tad harder than a 360 shuvit, but focus on a higher jump and more hang time to allow the board to rotate more.

### \*TIP\*

Build a mound in the sand and place the board on top of the mound. Practice your shuv-its here until you feel comfortable enough with your shuv technique to bring it to the water.

### Big Spin

A Big-Spin is basically a 180 rotation, combined with a 360 shuvit. You can introduce yourself to Big-Spins by dragging your hand for a 360 rotation while attempting a 180 shuvit at the same time. As you land this a few times, you'll want to focus on popping your shuv it and spin at the exact same time. Focus on just doing a 180 shuvit, the rotation of your body will naturally make the board complete a 360 shuvit rotation. As you land your first big spin, keep practicing with more pop.