

HIGHER EDUCATION

UNDER THE CABLE

INTRO → Ride more! You may have read about a lot of pro riders riding at cable parks a lot. Aaron Hadlow in particular is a big advocate of it for improving your technique. A great option for wind-less spells in the summer or winter, James Boulding goes through the ins and outs of cable riding and holds your hand round your first tentative lap

CAPTION → James Boulding proving that cable riding helps your kiting!
PHOTO → Jens Hogenkamp

Some of you may have already caught the cable buzz that has started to grip a growing number of kitesurfers keen to advance their wakestyle and 'kite low' riding style. But it's a misleading perception that the cable only offers practice potential and enjoyment for the advanced and power hungry in the sport. Over the next issues we will take a look at the all-round benefits for kitesurfers at any stage of their development that the cable park offers, from learning to board start, through to pressing out on 70 foot A-frames.

In essence the cable consists of a long wire that is held in place by towers and

powered around by a motor. Attaching a line with a handle at intervals on the cable enables up to eight riders to be pulled around the lake.

Swapping kite power for cable power means you never have to worry where the kite is and the pull from the cable is always the same, so you can concentrate solely on what the board is doing. For this reason it is great practice for people learning to board start or for getting used to the feeling of being unhooked on a kite. Further more, the option of being able to let go of the handle and ditch the pull at any moment offers a more relaxed way of getting pulled along on a board and learning anything,

from carves to crow mobs.

THE BASICS

Cable costs are usually around £15 for an hour's riding, with the option to add extra hours after that for an extra £5-10. Alternatively, day passes are available at most cables for around £35. If you are new to cable riding, then one or two hours will be ample time. Due to the fact that you aren't harnessed in and have to hold on to the cable and take all the force through your arms, you will definitely feel the burn after an intensive hour or two! Spreading your session over the whole day gives you the option of taking your time

and riding when you feel like it. The convenience of the cable gives you complete freedom as you aren't governed by what the wind is doing, so be it a sneaky hour session at lunch time, or the whole day spent riding, you're able to plan a session much easier, no matter what the wind is doing. What you may find odd, however, is riding in such a confined area compared to the space and freedom of the ocean, but you'll soon start to see the benefits for your riding.

If you can already kite you won't need a lesson but most places require you to watch a quick safety DVD if it's your first time to a cable-ski centre. The dock

operator will help give you pointers and, if you are happily water starting under a kite, you should find this very similar and, more likely, easier.

WAKEBOARD OR KITEBOARD?

Wakeboards (as well as helmets and buoyancy aids) can be rented for your session at all parks but the choice of what you ride is up to you. Kiteboards work on the cable and the option to ride in straps or bindings is completely up to you. Kite and wake bindings are very similar, most aren't specific so investing in a pair of bindings gives you the flexibility to use them for kiting as well as on the cable. Bindings offer a lot more support and stability and, due to the butter flat conditions you'll experience, a very worthy choice on the cable. Wakeboards are a lot stiffer than kiteboards and have more rocker to them, which makes popping easier and provides a better feel on the cable. As your average kiteboard is much more flexible and has less rocker, they flatten out and stick to the water more than a wakeboard. This makes them very fast on the cable and, if you're at the stage where you're trying new tricks, a wakeboard definitely has the advantage with more pop and less speed.

So, you're suited and booted, helmet and vest on (compulsory) and ready to go at the

dock. Here are some steps to successfully get you up and round the circuit.

The cable operator has the ability to take out lines when people let go/wipeout and then to slot in new ones from the dock, so you'll be given a handle and told to wait until you see a free carrier heading into the start motor.

This is where the operator earns his tuppence, so listen carefully to when he says you'll be starting. When you hear the click and see your line take up the tension, keep your elbows tucked in and allow the line to pull you off the dock.

As for kiting, stand up as you feel the pull and keep an equal weight on top of the board. Instead of sitting back and edging hard against the pull as you do when kiting, point your front foot towards the carrier and keep your weight firmly on top of the board, following the pull much more. This will bring you in line underneath the cable and then you're off!

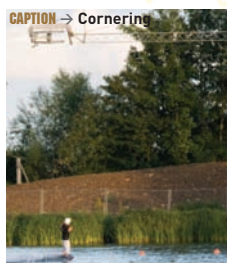
To help you round circuit there are buoys set up on each corner. As you approach, edge out a little from the cable to go between the buoys and, as the carrier clicks and changes direction, come off your edge and allow the cable to pull you round.

Pretty much every cable park (bar a couple) pulls you counter-clockwise; so if you prefer riding with your left foot

forward (regular) you will be going round the corners and leaning back on your heel edge. If you prefer right foot forward (goofy), you will be leaning forward on your toe-side edge to go round. In our first technique buster we go through the slide 180, giving you the freedom to

choose whether you go round the corners on your heel edge or toe edge.

NB: If the cable goes a little slack at any stage shift your weight back, keep your arms tucked in and get ready to absorb the pull as it comes on again.



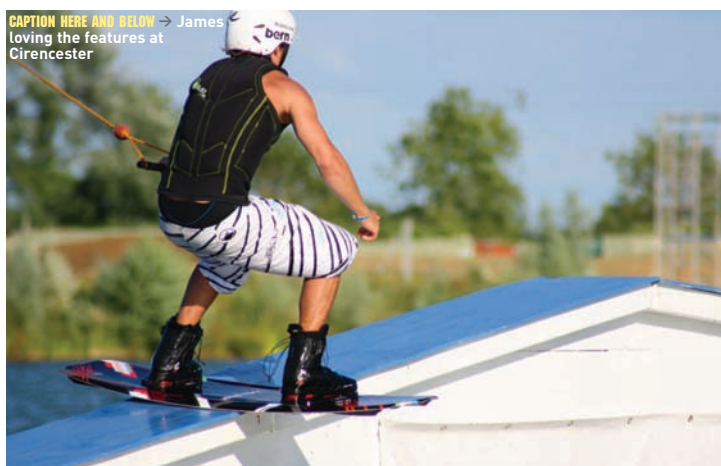
CAPTION -> Cornering



CAPTION -> Wait your turn



CAPTION -> Main launch



CAPTION HERE AND BELOW -> James loving the features at Cirencester





SLIDE 180 (SLIDING TO TOE-SIDE)

The first technique we'll look at on the cable is one that will help you greatly later on for when you're trying to switch to toe-side behind a kite. Doing this will open up your switch riding and help you practice riding on your toe edge.

At first we will do this on a straight while riding directly under the cable. NB: To give more of a feeling of being behind a kite, edge out gently on your heel edge against the cable and then perform the slide 180.

- Start with your weight shifted a little over the back of the board with your arms bent.
- Bring your weight slightly forward and push your back front round, pivoting on your front foot.
- Bring the handle from your front hip across your body and into the new

front hip with your new front foot pointing in line with the cable.

POP AND LOADING UP THE EDGE

Popping behind the cable has some similarities to popping behind a kite, but there are still some differences that we address here.

Edging out against the cable speeds the board up and adds tension in the line. Because we are not edging directly against the pulling force like we do in kiting, we need to edge longer and more progressively to load up the board and pop on release, rather a quick edge and release like we do on a kite. At the cable you will see the majority of tricks done just after the final corner. The reason being that this is where the cable is at it's highest, making air tricks easiest and the walk back to the dock the shortest, so it's a good place to practice. Getting a good edge and scoop leads to raley's on the cable so we will break down the edging

principle here.

Wait for the cable to click round and come off your edge to go through the gate.

Keep your arms tucked in and start to lean back forcing your weight onto your back foot and edge away from the cable

As you accelerate stay tucked in with your knees bent.

When you feel you can't edge further come off your edge by pointing your board back towards the cable and allowing the cable to bring you back on top of the board. Alternatively, scoop hard with your legs out behind you releasing the edge and throwing you up into the raley.

Land as you do in kiting; bringing the board back underneath you by pulling the handle into your hips and pointing the board at the direction of the pull. Remember also to bend your knees on impact.

DO'S AND DON'TS

Try not to carve in and out underneath the cable on the straights as it swings the

cable around for the other riders.

The lower your pants are the better the skills are perceived to be, so dress accordingly!

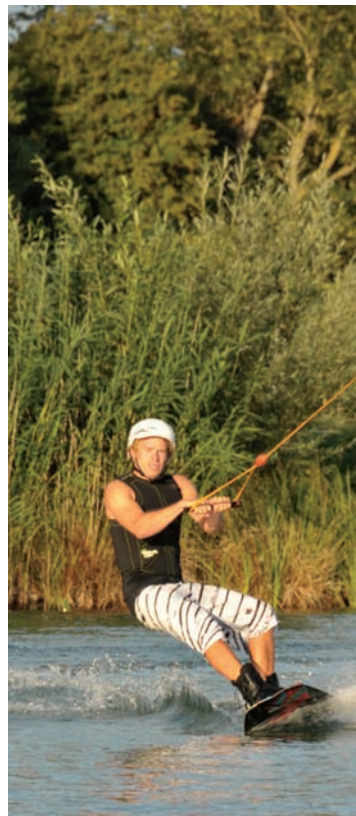
Definitely don't talk about kiteboarding being 'better' or 'cooler' than wakeboarding. We owe a lot to wakeboarding and all our modern freestyle tricks stem from wake tricks. Some of the same tricks we do in kiting are named differently to cable tricks, so allow for some strange looks if you start blathering on about your kiting bag of tricks.

If you're tempted to try one of the obstacles (kickers/rails/boxes) remember to take your fins off as it'll damage your board and obstacles, not to mention the more likely case of damaging yourself when you trip up.

Coming next, intermediate and advanced skills



CAPTION Popping



CABLE ACTION
 There are cable centres all over the country just like this one: WakeMK is one of the UK's leading Cable Parks with a super high cable acting just like a kite and allowing you to invert with ease. They also have the largest rail and kicker park that suits all abilities. This combined with an ideal central location, just off J14 on the M1, makes WakeMK the perfect venue for those windless days.
 Website: www.WakeMK.com
 Tel: 01908 670197
 Email: info@wakemk.com



CAPTION - Heel-to-toe-side... and toe-to-heel-side



Website: www.WakeMK.com Tel: 01908 670197 Email: info@wakemk.com

Open All Year!

Wakeboard Cable Milton Keynes

WakeMK is one of the UK's most established CABLE WAKEBOARD centres with a reputation for high quality coaching, a super high cable (giving you a pull just like a kite) and the UK's biggest rail park.

Professional Tuition

Whether you're just starting out and looking to refine your board skills or a seasoned Kitesurfer, we offer tuition to cater for all! These range from Faststart Courses, to get you going, all the way to Pro Coaching with British Team rider Will Manns for your inverts.

Pay & Play

If you don't require any tuition you can also just turn up and ride. If you have all your own kit, prices start from just £12 an hour!

Centrally Located

Set in 180 acres of parkland, WakeMK is centrally located just 3 minutes off J14 on the M1 and 5 minutes from Central Milton Keynes Station.

Pro Shop

Our fully stocked Pro Shop and online store has a wide range of Wakeboards, Bindings, Wetsuits, Impact Vests and Helmets. We stock Slingshot, Hyperlite, J-star, Gator and are proud to be an O'Neill Test Centre . Uniquely, we also have a full range of demo boards to try.

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WakeMK