



# Barefooting On Rough Water or Flat Water

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Photography by Lynn Novakofski

To find glass calm water as a barefoot water skier requires an early morning alarm. Those of you that live on a private lake or body of water that is quiet and protected are blessed. The mirror water that appears to look like oil is by far the most enjoyable water to glide across on your bare feet. That flat surface provides a perfect stage to perform on – helping balance, confidence and proper technique.

Rough water builds another breed of barefooters, and most of them are weekend warriors, figure 8-ers and show skiers, most known for their toughness on plowing through boat rollers and white caps. These 'footers take whatever a lake or river has to offer, and unfortunately, it is all they have available for practice.

The Rough Water (RW) stance is basically survival technique. Dig your heels deep into the water and pray that you survive the run. As seen in picture No. 1, my ankles/feet are pushed out in front of my knees. This causes spray to be pushed forward and come up to about

my knees or waist. This position will only allow half of your foot to be in the water. My arms are pulled in to act as shock absorbers. If my arms were fully extended the pull would come from my shoulders and cause me to lean back or get pulled forward. This stance also helps the legs from burning since they are so straight and locked out.

When 'footing on flat water, work on utilizing as much of your feet on the water as possible. Our feet are our skis, so use the full foot and it will provide less drag, less burn, less bruising and a stance that enables you to barefoot for miles. The water line should be just below the balls of your foot. Skiing clean also will enable the body to ski with less stress coming onto the hands and arms. I recommend 'footers get directly on the boom so they can experiment on how clean they can ski. This way you can save yourself from taking unnecessary falls. Barefoot skiing in a clean position also will help you learn one foots, toe holds and surface hops. Learning these tricks also will help you become a stronger, rough-water skier.

As seen in photo No. 2, my ankles are directly under my knees, my back is

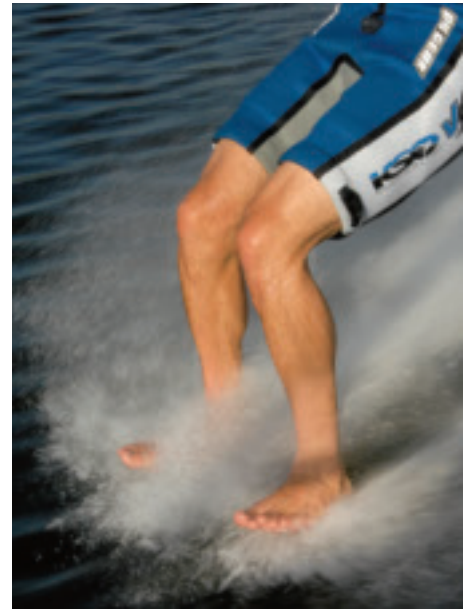
perpendicular to the water, and my arms are extended but not totally locked out. To help the glide, flex your knees forward and that will cause your feet to flatten out. Although I am standing tall, always stay in a low stance while learning to ski clean. As you put on more mileage in this clean stance you will be able to stand taller.

The down side to the RW stance is that it can only be used for one thing – rough water. Learning new tricks safely and efficiently in this position is pretty much a dead-end road. It is crucial that you understand and are able to ski in both positions when needed. If the water turns to glass, then 'foot clean. If the water becomes rough, then switch to the plowing position. Good luck with both positions and you will be ready for any tournament or water condition that Mother Nature throws at you.

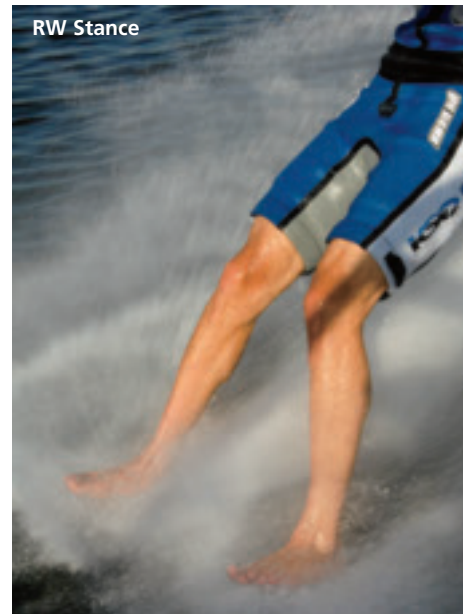
*The World Barefoot Center is located in Winter Haven, Fla., and Clermont, Fla. Whether you are a serious tournament skier or you just 'foot for fun, all levels are welcome. Keith is sponsored by Evinrude, Vortex, US Gear and Gopal's. For more information, visit [worldbarefootcenter.com](http://worldbarefootcenter.com) or e-mail [wbcbarefoot@gmail.com](mailto:wbcbarefoot@gmail.com).*



No. 1



RW Stance



No. 2

