

Can Anyone Learn to Barefoot?

Yes. No matter what your age or gender, if you have the desire to learn, you can be taught. How quickly one can learn only depends on a few factors, and that is what we will discuss. These factors are, do you have the right equipment, type of watercraft, and most importantly who is teaching you?

Though you *can* barefoot without having the right equipment, it makes the learning curve go a lot quicker. To start off, a barefoot wetsuit and a pair of padded barefoot shorts will help you more than you think. When you are just learning, you will spend a lot of time on your butt to maintain control, and having these items will make the experience much more enjoyable. KSO Wetsuits has a great new line of suits and shorts, meant for all levels of barefooting. Riding on your butt in a pair of board shorts and a life jacket is not going to be very comfortable, and you will probably never want to try to barefoot again. Another piece of equipment you will want to invest in is going to be a Barefoot Boom. If you feel brave and want to learn the hard way, going behind the boat is where you'll want to be, but the most progressive way will be directly off the boom. The boom is very stable to maintain control, you'll be right next to the boat for direction from the coach, and you won't have to deal with the boat's wake. Even if the child is younger, he or she will be able to sit in a handle or swing, and glide their feet on the water as they feel comfortable before trying a deepwater start.

The next factor is the towboat. First of all, you do not need to go very fast when you first learn, but trying to barefoot off of a jet ski, pontoon boat, or even some slower fishing boats is not going to be the best way to learn for anyone. Your beginning speed should be

your weight, divided by 10, plus 15 or 20. If prices are a large concern, a lot of the best barefoot boats are even under \$10,000, so there is no need to go spending \$30,000+ on a brand new boat.

Finally, the most important factor of your progression is the person who is teaching you. Like many other sports, the athlete who is the most technical and has the best coach usually succeeds. If you are getting bad instructions, it's going to take you a lot longer to learn the trick, than someone who has good instructions, and it is possible that you will develop bad habits and never be able to learn the trick at all. It would be most beneficial to go to either a ski school, or ski with someone who has experience in instructing. The WBC (World Barefoot Center) has 3 of the best coaches in the world, two of them being World Champions. You can check out the ski school at www.worldbarefootcenter.com for availability and rates.

So, before you start telling yourself you'll never be the guy or girl flying across the water on their bare feet, do some research and, before you know it, you may surprise yourself. Anybody can barefoot water ski, and with these factors in place, there is no limit to the success that can be achieved. For any questions or concerns, you can contact the WBC at (863) 877-0039 or by E-Mail at wcbarefoot@gmail.com.