

Aqua Buddy™

Water Ski & Wakeboard Trainer

Operator's Manual





WARNING

USE OF THIS PRODUCT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SPORT OF WATER SKIING & WAKEBOARDING INVOLVES INHERENT RISKS OF INJURY OR DEATH.

This product is not a toy. It is intended for use as a water sports training aid. Do not leave children unattended.

Read Operator's Manual before use.

Product Instructions and Warnings

To reduce the risk of injury or death while using the Aqua Buddy, follow these guidelines:

- Carefully read this manual and follow the instructions.
- Only use your Aqua Buddy with a responsible watercraft operator who knows how to operate a watercraft properly.

- Do not use in shallow water. This product is intended to be used in open water, a good distance away from docks, pilings or other hard objects.
- Use with a properly rated water ski/wakeboard rope only. The user of the Aqua Buddy must hold onto the handle end of the water ski/wakeboard rope.
- The Aqua Buddy is designed to assist the skier/wakeboarder during starts. It allows the user and device to travel together on the top of the water for a short distance and eliminates the timing and strength required with traditional “deep water” starts. When the skier stands up, the Aqua Buddy remains behind floating on the water.
- Never tie a tow rope directly to the Aqua Buddy.
- Inspect the Aqua Buddy as well as your water ski/wakeboard equipment prior to each use. Ensure the Aqua Buddy is firmly inflated and is not damaged in any way. Inspect fins and bindings for loose screws, wear, cracks, delamination, tearing or other damage.
- Water skiing instruction should be given to the user before attempting to ski/wakeboard from the Aqua Buddy. Instruction on body position, proper skiing techniques and general safety guidelines will reduce your risk of injury.
- The faster you ski, the greater your risk of injury. Beginners using children’s trainer skis should be towed at slower speeds that allow for reasonable control and stability. Beginners should use extra caution under the direct supervision of an adult or other experienced rider.

Product Instructions and Warnings (continued)

Before you start:

- Scout the area before use to avoid any debris or obstacles that might present a safety hazard.
- Check the rope and connectors for frays, cuts, sharp edges, knots, or wear before each use. Discard rope if any such condition exists or if rope appears to be worn. Such conditions may lead to breaks.
- Rope is subject to deterioration when exposed to direct sunlight. The life of the product will be extended when stored away from sunlight.
- Always have a person other than the driver as an observer.
- Skier/rider, observer, and driver must agree on hand signals.
- Never start until skier/rider signals they are ready.
- Do not use in shallow water or near docks, shore, pilings or other watercraft.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved type III (PFD) life jacket that fits skier/rider properly.
- Make sure skier/rider has properly fitting bindings.
- Use tow rope that is 50-65 feet long and do not shorten rope for beginning riders.

Inflating Instructions

CAUTION: DO NOT OVER-INFLATE. Use of an air compressor or over-inflation can rupture the product beyond repair, thus voiding the warranty.

Step 1:

Lay the Aqua Buddy on a flat surface. Make sure there are no sharp objects under the product that might puncture the tube.

Step 2:

Using a hand pump or powered inflator, inflate center seat first and then both pontoons until each just feels firm. Note: A firmly inflated product will perform better than a soft one. **DO NOT OVER INFLATE. INFLATE ONLY UNTIL FIRM.**

Moisten the plug of the clear stem valves prior to inserting into the valve and push plug down fully into the valve body.

Note that the air pressure in the product will fluctuate depending on air and water temperatures. Adjust the air pressure in the tube accordingly throughout the day to maintain proper firmness for use.

To Deflate:

- Remove all of the plugs and place deflating straws into valves or squeeze the valves to release the air.

Learning to water ski/wakeboard with the Aqua Buddy

The Aqua Buddy water ski/wakeboard trainer allows a beginner skier/boarder to start ABOVE THE WATER, eliminating the difficult learning curve and physical exertion associated with deep water starts. It may also be used by experienced skiers who struggle physically or emotionally with deep water starts.

The Aqua Buddy also eliminates the danger and difficult timing associated with dock starts. The Aqua Buddy travels WITH the skier until the appropriate time when the skier stands and is skiing on their own!

The Aqua Buddy can be used with most all types & sizes of water skis, trainer skis and wakeboards.

To ski:

1. It is best to put on the water skis first before getting onto the Aqua Buddy. Make sure the bindings are properly adjusted for the level of skier/rider.
2. Young children can be set onto the Aqua Buddy by an adult. Bigger skiers can shift their body from the rear swim platform of the boat/watercraft (if so equipped) onto the seat of the Aqua Buddy. Otherwise, from the water, simply pull up onto the seat using the handles provided.
3. Hand the ski rope handle to the skier.
4. Slowly remove any slack in the rope and be sure that the boat, rope and skier are in a straight line and facing the same direction. Do NOT attempt to start with the boat facing a different direction than the skier.

5. Rider should keep skis straight, shoulder width apart with both ski tips out of the water. For assistance, use **RAVE Sports Ski Buds™** on the tips of the skis.
6. Make sure the ski rope is between the skis, knees are slightly bent and the rider is relaxed. Encouragement and communication from the boat driver is helpful.
7. Once the skier signals to the boat driver that he/she is ready, the boat driver should begin pulling slowly for a few feet to get the Aqua Buddy and the skier moving and then accelerate quickly. The skier should stand up rather quickly after the boat accelerates.

Note: The skier will feel the pressure under his/her skis once the boat is underway. Stand up as soon as the boat is traveling fast enough to support the weight of the skier on their skis (usually within a few feet of pulling).

Once standing, the skis will plane out very quickly and the skier will be skiing!!

8. The Aqua Buddy will simply float on its own as soon as the skier takes his/her weight off the seat. Retrieve the Aqua Buddy as soon as possible following the completion of the ski run.

TIPS:

- It is better to accelerate quickly and have the skier stand up sooner rather than attempt to drag the Aqua Buddy and skier too far. Dragging too far will often result in the skis veering off to one side, creating frustration and fatigue in the beginner skier. For skiers with more coordination or leg strength, this will be less of an issue.
- It is best to drag only a short distance then accelerate quickly while the skis are straight and properly aligned.

Adjust take off speed and timing of when the skier stands if the skier fails to stand up and ski on the first attempt.

To wakeboard:

1. Once seated on the Aqua Buddy with wakeboard on, turn body sideways as much as possible so the wakeboard is facing forward.
2. Slowly remove any slack in the rope and be sure that the boat, rope and rider are in a straight line and all facing the same direction.
3. Make sure the rider's knees are slightly bent and the rider is relaxed.
4. Once the rider signals to the boat driver he/she is ready, the boat driver should begin pulling slowly for a few feet to get the Aqua Buddy and the wakeboarder moving and then accelerate quickly. The wakeboarder should stand up rather quickly after the boat accelerates.

Note: The wakeboarder will feel the pressure under his/her board once the boat is underway. Stand up as soon as the boat is traveling fast enough to support the weight of the wakeboarder on their board (usually within a few feet of pulling).

Once standing, the wakeboard will plane out very quickly and he/she will be wakeboarding!

TIPS:

- Beginners should start with the wakeboard pointing forward as much as possible. More experienced or stronger people may find it easier to start with the board 90 degrees to the direction of travel and turn quickly as he/she stands.



WARNING

- **Do not use at speeds that exceed the skill of the rider. Beginners should use extra caution. Start slow.**
- **This product should never be used by small children except under adult supervision.**
- **This is not a personal flotation device.**
- **Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type III (PFD) vest of the proper size for the user.**
- **Always have a person other than the driver observing the rider.**
- **Watercraft driver should avoid excessive speed or sharp turns that might cause the rider to lose control, resulting in serious injury to the rider.**
- **Do not use in shallow water or near shore, docks, pilings, swimmers or other boats.**
- **Never attach a tow line directly to the Aqua Buddy. User must hold the handle of the ski rope and release the handle in the event of a fall.**
- **Pull the Aqua Buddy in a straight line only, directly behind the boat or watercraft.**
- **Do not pull Aqua Buddy at speeds exceeding 15mph.**
- **Only one person on the Aqua Buddy at a time.**

Watersports Responsibility Code

Water sports are fun and challenging but involve inherent risks of injury or death. To increase your enjoyment of the sport and to reduce your risks, use common sense and follow these rules.

Before you start:

- Familiarize yourself with all applicable federal, state and local laws, the risks inherent in the sport and the proper use of the equipment.
- Know the waterways.
- Always have a person other than the boat driver as an observer.
- Rider, observer and driver must agree on hand signals.
- Never start out until rider signals he/she is ready. Observer and rider should maintain eye contact.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning from engine exhaust may cause injury or death. Do not sit on the boat transom or swim platform while the engine is running. These activities may lead to excessive CO exposure which may cause injury or death. If you can smell engine exhaust while in the boat, do not stay seated in that position for prolonged periods. Never "Platform Drag" by holding onto the swim platform or be dragged directly behind the boat. An improperly tuned engine will produce excessive exhaust. Have your engine checked and corrected by a mechanic. Changing boat speed or direction relative to the wind can reduce or increase boat exhaust from accumulating near the boat and rider. Consult your boat Owners Manual.
- Use caution and common sense.

Your Equipment and Your Tow Rope:

- Inspect all equipment prior to use. Check Aqua Buddy and water skis/wakeboard prior to each use. Do not use if damaged.
- Always wear a U.S. Coast Guard Type III (PFD) vest.
- Ropes should be attached to the watercraft in an approved fashion with hardware designed for pulling. Refer to your watercraft manual for instructions on proper tow rope attachment.
- Tow ropes stretch during use. If a rope breaks or is suddenly released, it can snap back into the watercraft. Warn all riders and occupants of the danger of the rope recoil.
- When in the boat, keep away from the tow rope to avoid injury. Passengers can be hit or become entangled in the rope.
- Inspect tow rope and its attachments before using. Do not use tow rope if frayed, knotted or damaged. Replace when signs of excessive deterioration are indicated by discoloration, broken filaments, unraveling or other obvious signs of wear on the rope or hardware.
- Use proper tow rope for the activity.
- Ensure rope is clear of all body parts prior to starting out or during use.
- Keep persons and ropes away from propeller when engine is running, even in neutral. Should rope become entangled in propeller, SHUT OFF ENGINE AND REMOVE IGNITION KEY BEFORE RETRIEVING ROPE.

When You Ride:

- **USE THIS PRODUCT ONLY ON WATER.**
- Always remove any slack in the rope between watercraft and rider before starting. Sudden shock loads may cause injury to the rider or failure of rope, resulting in snap-back or breakage.
- Do not ride in shallow water, near shore, pilings, docks, rafts, swimmers, other boats or other obstacles. Such obstacles are examples of risks that are inherent in the sport.
- The driver and rider must watch for and be able to stop or turn to avoid obstacles.
- Always ride in control and at speeds appropriate for your ability. Ride within your limits. Follow instructions on tube for safe speed limits.
- Falling and the injuries that may result are inherent risks in the sport.
- Use a flag to signal to others that a rider is in the water.
- Driver must use extra caution approaching fallen rider and keep eye contact on fallen rider at all times.
- Put the boat in neutral when near a fallen rider. Turn the engine off when people are getting in or out of the boat, or while in the water near the boat.
- Do not operate watercraft or ride under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Troubleshooting

Air chamber(s) won't hold air:

- Check stem valves to ensure plugs are fully seated down into the valve body.
- Check for holes in bladder following the procedures in the "Repair" section.

Cleaning and Storage

- When the inflatable product is not being used, we recommend that you store it in a covered, shaded area. This will help protect it against ultraviolet (UV) rays and extend the life of the product.
- Clean the inflatable completely with a mild soap and fresh water. **NEVER USE PETROLEUM BASED PRODUCTS OR SOLVENTS FOR CLEANING.**
- Product should be completely dry and remain dry while stored.
- Roll the product loosely and place in a vented storage bag or container.
- Store in a cool, dry location. Do not store product directly on concrete surface. Place mothballs around stored inflatable to keep mice and insects away.

Repairs

For minor holes or tears:

- Inflate the tube and locate the leak by spraying the tube with soapy water. Bubbles will appear where there is a leak.
- Determine the hole size and cut a circular patch $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 inch wider than the hole.
- Remove air from the tube and dry tube completely where the patch is to be applied.
- Peel off paper back from patch, apply repair patch to area and work out any air bubbles from beneath the patch.
- Apply weight to the patched area for one hour before re-inflating.