

LIFE HACKS FOR PERSONAL WATERCRAFT



Riding personal watercraft is a bonding experience for friends and family that creates lasting memories.

Here are some tips and tricks – from beaching to the latest cool toys – to make life on the water easier, and more enjoyable for all.

Maximizing Fun On The Water



ONE Want to float in the cove without bobbing around like a CSI Miami body in a straitjacket? Put your legs through the PFD's armholes. It works like a floating chair. "Pool floats" also accomplish the same thing by keeping your arms and legs free, so you don't have to tread water.

TWO Crave a cold drink while you're floating near your WaveRunner? Cut a pool noodle into pieces and attach them along each edge of a big plastic container to create a cheap floating icebox. The floating Jeeves is always there with ice and drinks.

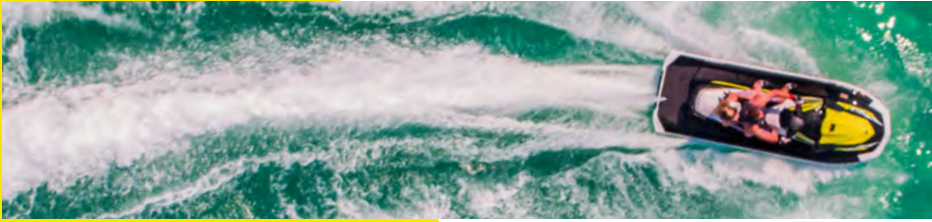
THREE Crew full of thirsty kids? Write everyone's name on the drinks with a Sharpie. That'll mean fewer wasted drinks and a lot less backwash when the kids start screaming for a soda.

FOUR Need tunes? No problem. Yamaha sells a range of speaker kits that can be installed. Or for any easy hack, put your phone inside a plastic cup to amplify your favorite music. It's not Bose, but it works.

FIVE If you aren't sure how much time before sundown, extend your arm just below the horizon. Count the number of hand widths between the horizon and sun. Each hand width is about an hour. It's a rough estimate, so make sure you leave some extra time to get home.

Sun & Fun

Use these hacks for sunburn, jellyfish stings and water in the ears



ONE Use a high SPF number sunscreen stick for kids, rather than an aerosol or lotion, to increase water resistance. Apply throughout the day. Lip balm with sunscreen also tends to hold longer, so it might not be a bad thing to apply it to your little ones' lips and nose. If they get too much sun, a spray bottle filled with a 50/50 mix of apple cider vinegar and water will instantly relieve pain. Baby wipes on sunburned skin also reduce pain.

TWO For jellyfish stings, remove the tentacles by scraping the skin with a credit card. Then wash the sting for 20 seconds with vinegar and follow with hot water. Ice packs can be used to reduce swelling. Meat tenderizers can also be used as a quick remedy since the papain enzyme in the tenderizer breaks down the protein found in jellyfish venom.

THREE Water in the ears is another major bummer. The easiest way to release the water is to create a vacuum. Tilt your head sideways with the clogged ear parallel to the ground. Place your palm flat against your ear and press firmly for a few seconds to create a vacuum. Quickly remove your hand and pump it a few times until the water drains.



Trailer, Docking & Beaching

Let's face it: Docking and trailering can be two of the most stressful experiences in any boater's life. Here are some easy hacks to reduce the hassle and limit the gray hairs.

ONE Trailer jackknifed on the launch ramp and you're getting the evil eye from everyone behind you? First of all, forget the rubberneckers and naysayers. You've got this. Focus. Keep your foot on the brake, and then turn the steering wheel as far as it goes in the opposite direction of the jackknife. If it's jackknifed to the left behind the trailer, turn the wheel all the way to the right. Turn the wheel right if it's jackknifed to the right. Release the brakes slowly and pull forward to align the tow vehicle and trailer. Once straight, back her right in and watch those mug, know-it-all expressions run off their faces.

TWO The neutral hack applies to a WaveRunner when preparing for a hard turn. If you're rounding a buoy or making a fast turn, release the throttle for a split second. That plants the bow in the water. Then hit the throttle to power through the turn. The WaveRunner turns faster because there is more hull under the surface for the water to grab onto.

THREE Beaching is one of the best experiences of boating. It lets boaters get into isolated areas, like uninhabited islands or deserted shoals, that might be inaccessible any other way. Doing it correctly is critical. First, know the bottom surfaces as well as the tidal movements to avoid grounding. The best way is to come in slowly to knee-deep water, and spin the WaveRunner 180 degrees so the bow is facing outwards. If you have sand spikes, fasten them to both sides of the stern, so the watercraft is pointed in the right direction. When it's time to leave, it's a matter of just turning on the engine and motoring off.

Cool Tools

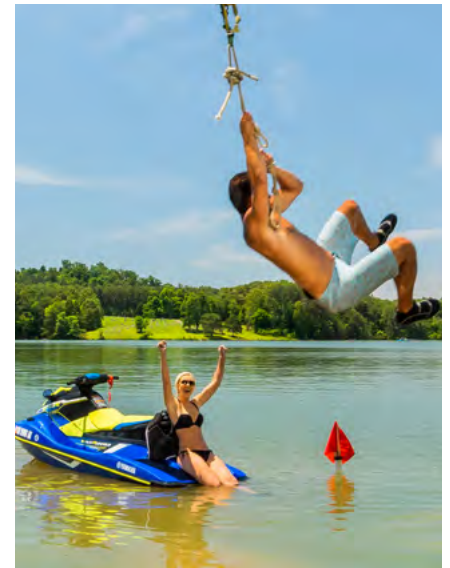


ONE Besides the usual wrenches and screwdrivers, here are tools that will come in handy in a pinch: Waterproof flashlight, metal or nylon toothbrushes for cleaning, dental picks for tiny scraping gunk or grease in hard-to-access areas, extendable magnets for retrieving small nuts, inspection mirrors for seeing around tight corners, right-angled screwdriver, turkey baster for removing liquids from tight areas, Duct and/or Rescue tape and, of course, a multi-tool like a Gerber or Leatherman.

TWO The other necessary tool is a weather app for your phone. Not all are created equally, so make sure yours gives local updates and audible warnings for approaching storms. This tool could be the most valuable on the WaveRunner.



Easy On-board Hacks

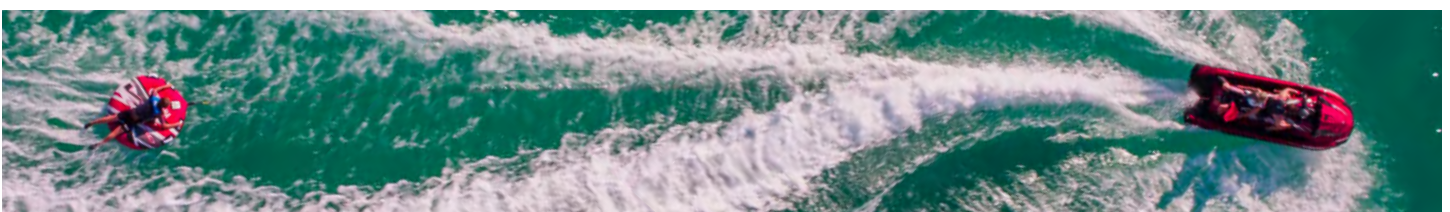


ONE Instead of packing a cooler full of ice cubes, freeze a few jugs of water. They'll not only last much longer than cubes, but you'll have fresh, cold water for the WaveRunner later.

TWO Use sealable bags to store items like clothes on board. They'll make bulky items easier to store in smaller compartments, while keeping them dry. The same goes for using small Tupperware containers for cell phones and small electronics. Vacuum-sealing the first-aid kit is also a good idea to avoid water penetration.

THREE Want to be green on board? White vinegar is safer than bleach for removing mildew and other stains on upholstery. Lemon cleans brass. Use oven cleaner to remove paint from gelcoat.

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Easy On-board Hacks



FOUR Zippers on your plastic covers frozen? Don't try to force them open, but use what you have on board— petroleum jelly, lip balm or a splash of white vinegar should do the trick. If the clear plastic is fogged, a headlamp restoration kit at the local automotive store should be an easy repair.

FIVE A Tic-Tac box works great for carrying extra hooks or flies for the anglers on board.

