

Unhooked Back Roll

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Step One - Trick Overview

Keep the kite at 1 or 11 o'clock and come in with good speed. Ride downwind to unhook, carve back upwind, and lean backward. Remember, just like our popping video, you need to keep good body posture and stay locked at your hips while loading up your lines. Keep your chest and hips facing the sky and treat your body as a unit.

You'll feel tension load up. For the back roll, it's a good idea to load a bit longer than the Raley. You need the extra pop and height to throw you into the roll. Right as the tension hits its apex, hold a moment longer. As you release your edge, you'll want to look over your back shoulder.

The Release

For the back roll, it might be tempting to release your edge late. I mentioned holding the edge a moment longer, but you want to do a normal scoop. If you do release late, you can even complete a good part of the rotation before you leave the water. That's actually bad form unless you're going for a bigger trick. If you are struggling with the release, go back to our popping video and try some of those tips on this trick.

As you come off the water, keep looking over your shoulder and spot your landing. Your body is going to follow your head. Keep the bar close throughout the entire roll. As you come around, pull the bar into your lead knee. Point the nose of your board towards the kite and land downwind, riding at the kite.

Step Two - Body Position

Remember, the body is going to follow your head on this trick. To initiate the roll, you just look over your shoulder and swing your hips. At first, keep things simple and just go for a basic roll. As you leave the water, keep your arms bent and the bar close. Bring your knees into your chest and swing your hips around. You need to keep your knees tucked in for this one or you'll get stretched out. It's always good form to keep one knee more tucked than the other.

From here, you can start experimenting with how you roll, either by spinning with the momentum after your scoop or really swinging your back hip into a more inverted roll.

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Also think about what you're doing with your head. If you throw your head back more and quickly bring your back knee hard into your chest, you'll invert the roll. This is where personal style comes in so just do what feels good and have fun with it!

Landing

To land, as you look over your shoulder you should be able to see the water pretty quickly; look at the water and spot your landing. Pull hard on your front hand to flick the kite down and pull the control bar hard into your lead hip. It's actually really helpful to take your back hand off the bar. Point your nose at the kite and land flat, centered over both of your feet, not favoring any edge. This will take the power out of the landing and it's going to look better.

After you land this a few times, I recommend letting go with your back hand. It's going to make everything look and feel more fluid.

To do this, as soon as you get the board under you, just bend your knees and let go with your back hand. Remember to land flat and riding at the kite. Hook back in before you lose too much board speed and ride away.

Step Three - Variations

Like the raley, there are different things you can experiment with. Start with the standard back roll, and once you have that on lock try to start inverting your rolls more. You can throw your head back and bring your front knee in more aggressively to swing your hips up. The more you throw your head back and the closer you can get your front knee to your chest, the more you will invert. Speed helps too.

You should experiment with the axis of your rotation. The more inverted you can get this one, the better. This is also an easy trick to try grabs. Taking your back hand off the bar for a grab will cause you to redirect the kite down, making the trick and the landing naturally look better. The trick to learning unhooked grabs is to practice while hooked in. Try a few sent jumps getting the grab. Then try popping with the kite low and hooked in. By the time you do try a grab unhooked, it should be second nature.

The key difference in doing grabs unhooked is to go fast and keep up with the bar in the air. You need to keep your arms close. Try a couple of kite low, back hand grabs while hooked in. It feels surprisingly close to the unhooked variation and it will save you a lot of agony learning grabs.

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Step Four - Mistakes

Like the raley video, most of the same mistakes apply. When people are intimidated by the power of the kite, they tend to let their arms out, bend at the hips like a hinge and come off their edge early or just have a soft edge in general. Remember, treat your body as a unit. Keep your arms in close like you never unhooked. Keep a hard edge, lean back, and keep your hips and chest facing the sky while you load.

The other big mistake here is the late release. Sometimes people get ahead of themselves and want to roll too early. They start the rotation while they are still scooping. Make sure you pop hard and release your edge before you start the roll. It helps to pop hard and swing your hips after you release.

You can try the late release while learning to get comfortable, but try to go bigger on this one. If you get in the habit of rolling with your back close to the water, it's going to hold you back later on some basic variations like the Back-to-Blind. Get in the habit of going as big as possible now. It will pay off in droves when you want to take it to blind.

Another common mistake is sending the kite to noon while you roll. It's easy to pull on your back hand while rotating around. If you do this, the kite will pull you up and drop you. To fix this issue, keep your hands close to the center of the bar. As you pop, pull hard on your front hand. You can even take your back hand off while rolling to ensure that you don't send the kite.

So that's it! Get out there and give it a try.