



How to...

RECORD RIDER

Mike Stewart of the US has won the most world bodyboarding championships, with a total of nine titles.



Learn to bodyboard

Check out this fun, easy way to ride the ocean's waves this summer.

Bodyboarding—also known as boogie boarding—is a water sport that's great for beginners. Unlike surfing, where you stand and balance on a long board, bodyboarding involves a shorter board you ride on your stomach. "Bodyboarding is a really exciting way for kids to enjoy our ocean playground," says Jennifer Steffener, co-owner of Coastline Adventures Surfing School in Mantoloking, New Jersey. Here's how to get started.

Get the right board

First, find a boogie board that's the right size for your height. Stand one up with the bottom (tail) touching the ground. The top (nose) should be level with your belly button. You'll also need a swim shirt to shield your skin from the board's friction. And be sure to wear sunscreen.

Follow safety basics

Only go bodyboarding when there's a lifeguard present at the beach. Go with a trusted adult and a swim buddy. Attach the strap to your arm to keep your board from floating away. Head to the water, carrying the board on your hip to secure it. Pick a landmark, like the lifeguard chair or your family's umbrella, and check that you stay lined up with it.

Read the ocean

Several waves, one right after the other, that are big and powerful are called a set. Between sets there's a quiet period—a lull—where waves are smaller. Enter the water during a lull, walking out to where it's knee-deep. Place your board in the water, lie on your belly, hold the sides (rails), and kick to propel yourself out further. Once you're out far enough, stand up sideways, holding your board in front of you toward shore, while keeping

an eye on the waves behind you. When a wave comes and starts to crumble, that's when you'll point the nose of your board toward the beach, lie on the board, and launch yourself onto the wave. Steer the board left or right by leaning on your elbows. As you approach shore, slide to the back of the board and lift up the nose to slow down. As you improve, you can paddle out farther and enjoy even longer rides.

Keep your board in top shape

Avoid piling things on your board and dragging it to your spot on the sand. This can scratch the slick side of the board that helps it glide. At home afterward, rinse your board to remove sand and salt. Store it upright in a dry place, ready for the next time you ride the waves!



Boogie with a buddy.

The first boogie board



The world's first boogie board was created by a US engineer, surfer, and jazz musician named Tom Morey (shown above, with a current board on the left and his original board on the right).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Morey made surf gear. In the summer of 1971, he was at home in Hawaii when he made a short board by cutting a 9-foot piece of polyethylene packing foam in two. He used an iron to seal it with newspaper.

He named his invention the Morey Boogie, after a type of swing music. He first sold the boards as custom kits, and they later became mass-produced. By 1977, 80,000 boogie boards were being made each year.