

DEEP-WATER PACK-DOWN / SELF-RESCUE

Listen up rookies! You should have gone over this in your lessons, but it's definitely worth a good recap. Situations that require a self-rescue may vary, but every kiteboarder will encounter the need for it at least once. Anything from a sudden change of wind direction, drastic changes in the wind speed (increase or decrease) to approaching storm fronts are some natural obstacles that might stop you from being able to kite back in to the beach. Broken equipment, such as tangled bridles, busted chicken-loops and snapped lines are a few gear malfunctions that will also render your equipment useless. Here is how to self-rescue back to shore safely:

FIRST TIP:

If you are into whale watching, remember that the further you kite from shore in the first place, the longer the swim back in will be. Always remember to kite within a distance you feel you could comfortably swim in.

01: ONE LINE THE KITE

Make sure your kite leash is attached to one single line (preferably a centre line) and release your

safety located on/above your chicken-loop from your harness. The kite should flag out completely on to one line, disabling the kite from further use or accidental flight. This is meant to depower the kite as much as possible, while still keeping you attached so it doesn't fly off.

02: RETRIEVE THE BAR

Move hand-over-hand up the single line, keeping tension on it until you reach the bar. (Note: continue beyond the bar to retrieve the kite in an emergency situation). Wrap the single line around the bar end several times to lock it off. An additional option is to remove your kite leash from the line and attach it to your board's foot strap to help keep it close throughout the duration of the self-rescue.

03: WRAP UP THE LINES

Begin wrapping all of your lines around the ends of the bar as neatly as possible. Continue winding the lines towards the kite until you are within half of the kite's length, making sure along the way that only the original line is tensioned. Lock off all four lines by wrapping them a few times around one bar end and finish with a half-hitch. Grab hold of the kite and move towards the centre of the leading edge, which should be upside down in the

same position as if you were inflating it. Attach your bar's chicken loop to the Velcro of one of the main valves to secure it.

04: SAIL TO SHORE (SKIP TO FULL PACK DOWN IF NECESSARY)

Decide whether you can use the kite to sail you back to land; if not, skip to full pack down (step 5). In order to use the kite to sail in, you'll need to fold the kite in half and work your way down to be able to touch both wing tips. If the air pressure in the leading edge prevents you from doing this, you may need to let a little air out of the leading edge, but be careful not to let too much out. Also make sure that your struts are segmented off with the clips so they don't lose any air. Some kites have handles to aid in self-rescues just inside the canopy wing tips. Otherwise, grab hold of the two front bridles or wing tips. Position your kite towards shore and begin to sail in.

05: FULL PACK DOWN

A few reasons why you may no longer be able to sail to shore include: the wind dying, increasing dramatically or switching offshore; the leading edge deflated; the kite split in half, or worse! As the kite is no longer of any use, it is necessary to pack down your kite as much as possible to be

able to swim in more easily. After completing step three, deflate only the leading edge. Prevent the struts from losing air on one-pump systems by clipping off the connector tubes. Roll up both sides of the kite until they meet at the centre strut. Be sure to close the release valve to ensure that no water gets into the leading edge bladder. Take off your harness and wrap it around the rolled up struts of your kite. Place the secured kite on top of your board and then climb on. The inflated struts will act as good floatation as you begin to tire during the sizeable swim back to shore.

Self-rescues can often be overlooked in the learning process, but they are necessary for a self-sufficient kiteboarder. Sudden equipment failures and unexpected weather changes can be hard to see and avoid for any rookie, amateur or even professional kiteboarder. Knowing how to properly rescue all of your equipment, and yourself, is integral to having safe sessions every time. So the next time something goes terribly wrong you can be confident that you will make it back safely and efficiently, just in time to grab a drink with your buddies to tell them about your well-averted kite mare.

Catch Paul at www.airpadrekiteboarding.com

GETTING BACK IN ONE PIECE

NEXT ISSUE WE WILL BE REINFORCING SOME KEY KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS USEFUL FOR YOUR FIRST FEW TIMES TURNING UP TO THE BEACH ALONE, SUCH AS WHERE TO PUMP UP AND LAY OUT YOUR LINES, WHERE TO CHOOSE TO LAUNCH AND LAND, AS WELL AS REFRESHING THE TIPS YOU LEARNT IN YOUR LESSONS FOR BEACH STARTS. BUT FOR NOW, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW EVEN BEFORE CONCERNING YOURSELF WITH ALL THAT: MAKING SURE YOU CAN GET YOURSELF SAFELY BACK TO SHORE, SHOULD YOU NEED TO. PAUL SHEETZ FROM AIR PADRE ON SOUTH PADRE ISLAND PROVIDES THE INSTRUCTION

CAPTION → Reel in, roll up
PHOTO → Air Padre

