

How to Skip Stones

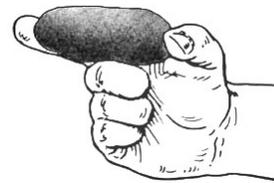
Find a smooth water surface with a good supply of rocks; lake shores or calm areas of rivers are best. Ocean beaches are not very good because of the waves.

Select your stone. Look for a skinny, flat, round rock about the size of your palm. Try to find the thinnest rock possible, but not too lightweight. The smoother and flatter the stone, the better it will skip across the surface of the water.



If the rocks are too slippery for you to hold onto, find ones with a chip or a bump in them to help you get a better grip. Try out different kinds of stones to see what works best for you.

One way to hold the stone is to put your index finger against the edge of the rock. Hold the flat sides of the rock with your thumb on one side and your middle finger on the other.

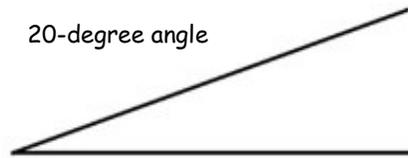


What matters most is throwing the stone to send it spinning in a straight line with the flat side parallel to the water.

Stand facing sideways to the water, with your feet shoulder width apart, with your non-dominant side closest to the water's edge.

Try squatting down close to the water so that when you throw, your rock will be close to parallel with the surface of the water.

The ideal angle between the stone and the water is 20 degrees; a smaller angle allows friction to slow the stone down, making it sink, while a bigger angle causes the stone to cut into the water and sink.



Flick your rock across the water's surface with a sharp movement of the wrist. It's similar to throwing a Frisbee. Throw it as fast as you can without losing form. Angle and spin are more important than speed.

If your stone bounces off the water and goes high in the air, you may be throwing the rock down too close to yourself; try throwing it so the first skip is further away from you.

If you throw it too far, the stone may "surf" across the surface of the water (rather than skip) allowing friction to slow the rock's momentum, causing it to sink.

The taller you are, the more you might need to compensate by throwing the stone faster to avoid making the angle too wide.

Keep trying and have fun. Happy skipping!