

WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO SURVIVE A TWO-WAVE HOLD-DOWN

A two-wave hold-down occurs when a surfer falls off a surfboard while riding a large wave and is held under water for two successive waves.

1 Bail your board.

If you are in the impact zone (the area where the lip of the wave meets the trough), dive off your board.

2 Avoid the “washing machine.”

The washing machine, the white water that occurs as the wave crashes, is turbulent, full of air, and difficult to pierce and swim in. Attempting to surface through it will extend your hold-down.

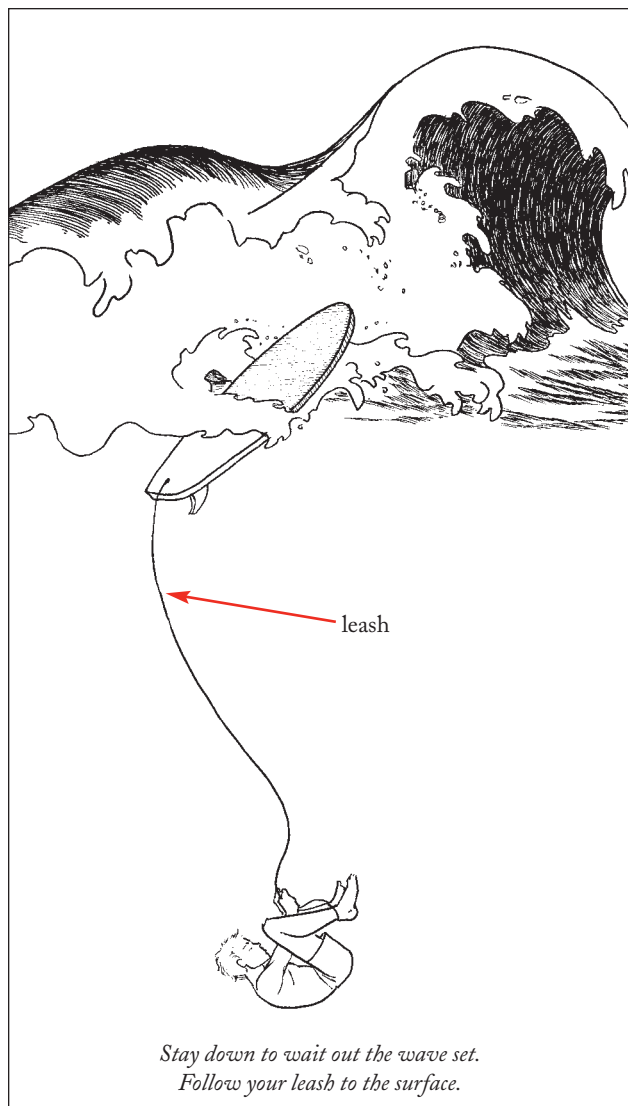
3 Do not struggle.

Fighting a very big (or “rogue”) wave will quickly exhaust you and increases your risk of drowning. Remember to “think before you sink.”

4 Dive.

Swim as deep as you can. Big-wave leashes (the rope that connects you to your floating board) may be 20 feet long, allowing you to go very deep.

5 Allow the first wave to pass over you.



6 **Locate the board's leash.**

If you are disoriented and unable to determine which way is up, grab your ankle and “follow your leash.” Since the leash is attached to your floating surfboard, it will lead you to the surface.

7 **Swim toward the surface.**

As you approach the surface, place your hands above your head. Your surfboard may be “tombstoning,” with its tail submerged and its nose pointing to the sky. Positioning your arms above your head will protect you from hitting your surfboard, a Jet Ski, or another wiped-out surfer as you come up for air.

8 **Wait out the set of waves by diving underneath them.**

Waves typically come in sets of three to five, depending on the day and surf conditions. Count the waves as they break so you'll know when the water will calm. Swim as deep as you can and curl your body into a defensive ball as the waves pass overhead. Come up for a quick breath between each wave, if possible, as you wait for the set to subside.

9 **Paddle to calmer water.**

When the set has passed, swim to the surface. Climb on your surfboard and paddle as fast as you can farther out to sea, beyond the impact zone, or into the “channel,” the blue water that is sometimes to the left or right of the white water.

Be Aware

- Never position your surfboard between your body and a big wave: It will smash into you.
- Never put your back to the waves unless you are paddling to catch a wave and ride it.
- A big wave may hold you down for more than 30 seconds.

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