

# HOW TO SURVIVE A RACE CAR SPINOUT

On the racetrack, a high-speed (180 mph or more) spinout is a rear-wheel skid or slide, also called “oversteer.” To counteract oversteer and regain control of the car, take the following steps.

## 1 Turn into the spinout.

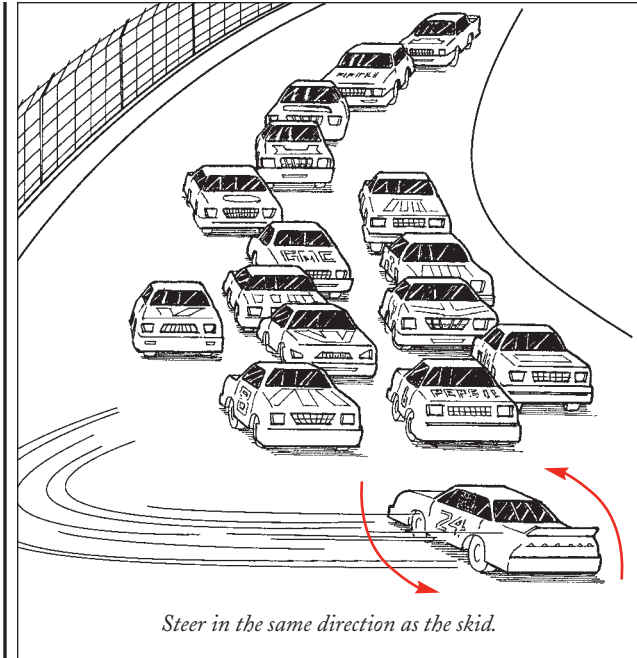
Determine which way the rear of the car is sliding, then turn the steering wheel in the same direction. For example, if the back of the car is sliding to the right, turn the steering wheel to the right. Do not jerk the wheel. Apply smooth, controlled inputs or you risk losing control. (The steering systems on race cars vary, but typical stock cars have power-assisted steering.)

## 2 Apply steady throttle.

Oversteer occurs when the rear wheels lose traction. Because most race cars are rear-wheel driven, stepping on the gas and accelerating transfers the car’s weight to the rear wheels, aiding traction. (These same forces “push” you back into the driver’s seat when you accelerate quickly during everyday driving; this is called “weight transfer.”)

## 3 Do not brake.

Applying the brakes transfers weight to the front wheels, which will only increase your spin.



## 4 Focus on the track ahead of you.

During the skid (and after you regain control), make sure the car is heading in the proper direction. Observe the cars around you and concentrate on where you want the car headed, not where it is going.

## 5 Unwind the wheel.

As you feel the rear of the car begin to come in line, slowly bring the steering wheel back to center. Avoid attempting to “counteract” the spin by turning the wheel too far in the opposite direction. If you cannot regain control, continue to the next step.

## 6 Brake.

Once the car is out of control and a crash is imminent, apply the brakes to slow your rotational momentum.

## 7 Prepare for impact.

A stock car has a full race cage, a racing harness (a five-point seat belt), and a collapsible steering column, and you will be wearing a head and neck restraint. If you sense that impact with the wall or another vehicle is imminent, relax your body and let the car's safety devices protect you. Loosen your grip on the wheel or let go of it, keep your knees slightly bent, and do not tense your neck muscles.

## 8 Get out.

Your fire-protection suit and gloves are designed to protect you from heat and flames for several minutes. However, in the event of fire, get out of the car (climb through the window opening) as soon as it is safe to do so, or when help arrives.

### Be Aware

- Do not downshift during a spinout—it is likely to lock the rear wheels. Downshift only when the car is moving in a straight line.
- Stock cars do not have air bags.
- All stock cars have braided, stainless-steel fuel lines to reduce the possibility of a fuel spill after a crash.

- The fuel tank in a stock car contains a rubber “bladder” filled with foam to absorb crash impact forces and reduce the chance of explosion.
- Standard racing tires (or “racing slicks”) have no treads. The fewer the grooves, the more rubber the tire has against the road to increase traction. After multiple laps (the number varies with the tire compound and track conditions) tires get too hot, their rubber compounds break down, and they need to be replaced.
- During a race, the car's cockpit temperature may reach 130 degrees Fahrenheit or more, and the steel roll cage may be even hotter.