

WaterDog Adventure Gear®

WAG Boarding Steps™

Model SLM-12

Owner's Manual

U.S. Patent No. 8,596,212



Read this manual completely and follow instructions prior to use.

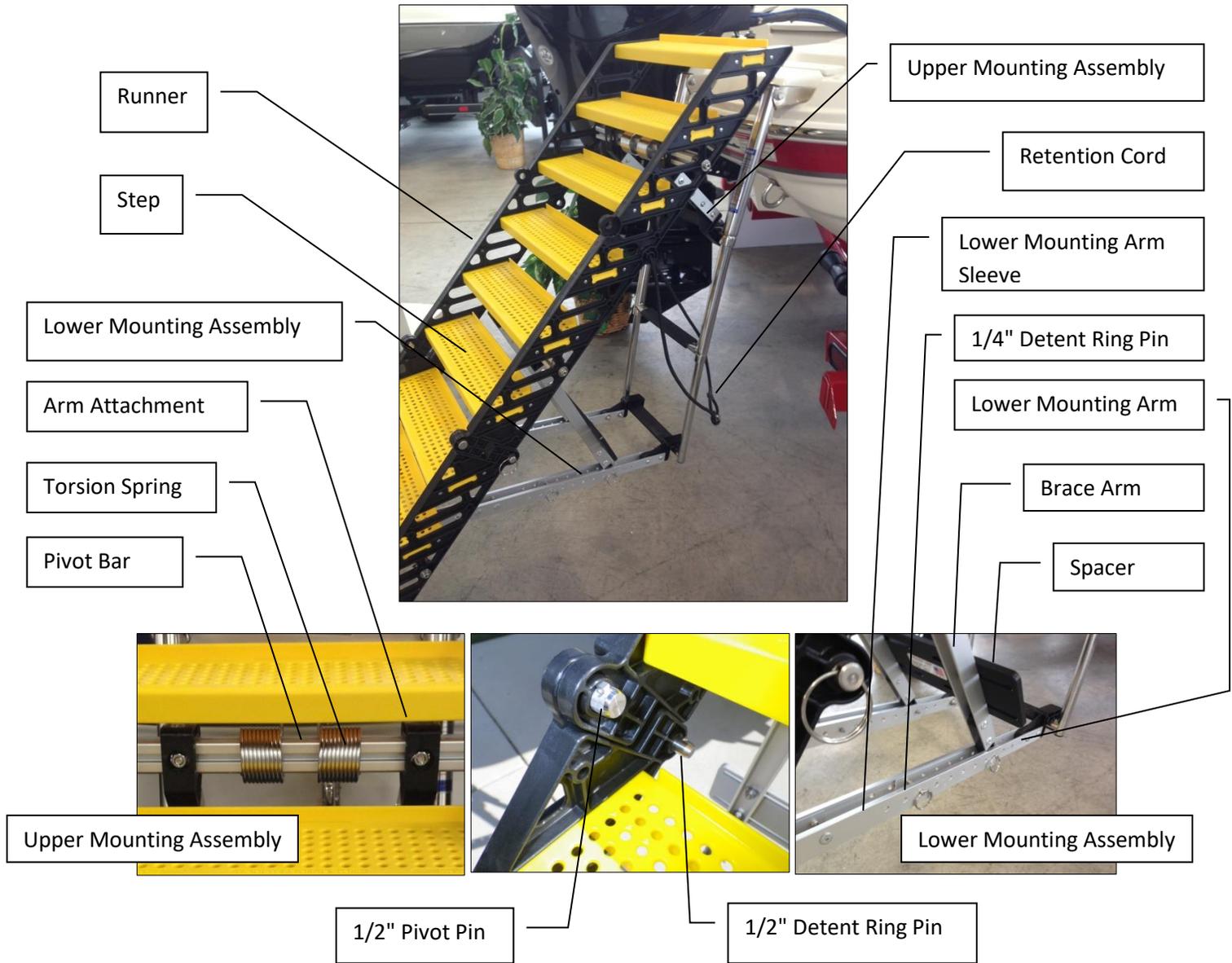
Improper use may cause injury and/or equipment damage.

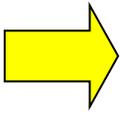
WAG Boarding Steps have a maximum capacity of 130 pounds and are designed for dog use only.

Welcome to the WaterDog Adventure Gear® family and thank you for your purchase!

As excited as you and your dog are to begin using your WAG Boarding Steps, there are a few important actions to take prior to use and for safe and enjoyable ongoing ownership.

Assembly Overview





Initial Setup Prior to Use (Fitment)

Tools Required: 7/16" socket driver, 5/32" hex driver

Your new WAG Boarding Steps come assembled from the factory. For safe and optimum performance, the initial setup (fitment) for your specific boat must be performed prior to use since boat swim ladders come in many different styles, shapes and sizes. The initial setup is best done with the boat out of the water to observe fit.

WAG Boarding Steps are designed to work on the majority of boat swim ladder designs. The step assembly should be fitted for:

- the **hook size** to minimize fore and aft movement of the steps
- the **angle and rung positioning** of the boat swim ladder to achieve the proper angle of the steps when installed
- the **width** of the boat swim ladder to minimize relative lateral movement of the steps

WAG Boarding Steps are designed to mount on swim ladder designs that have:

- a lower horizontal cross-member (pivot bar or rung) that is at least 18" below the upper cross-member
- a cross-member cross-section of no more than 1-1/2" in two 1"-wide areas; if more than 1-1/2", an optional adjustable hook kit may be required

Most 3-step (or more) folding and telescoping swim ladders meet these criteria. A 2-step swim ladder with pivot bar will also typically meet these criteria.

Hook Size

Carefully remove the folded assembly from the package. Stand the unit up on a flat surface with the mounting arms pointing up. The retention cord should be fastened around the assembly to prevent the mounting arms from pivoting open or bending. The end of the arms will have exposed metal edges until the hooks are installed. The steps were supplied with two hook opening sizes, 1" and 1-1/2". Select the size that fits best over the cross-members of the boat swim ladder by trying them as loose pieces. Install the hooks on the upper and lower mounting arms using the hardware supplied in the arm attachment holes. The hooks will only install one way. The screw head should be on the outboard side of the arms and the washer and lock nut should be on the inside of the arms. The stainless steel hardware is pre-treated with ECK® Corrosion Protection Compound which also serves as an anti-seizing agent. Tighten firmly. If neither of the hook sizes fit, it may be necessary to obtain the optional adjustable hook kit accessory.

Angle and Rung Positioning

Boat swim ladders have different angles and rung dimensions. The mounting arms are preassembled to provide adequate adjustment for the majority of boat swim ladder designs. To determine the mounting arm positioning to achieve the proper angle of the steps when installed:

Step 1 - Stand the folded assembly on end with the hooks down, unhook the retention cord and let hang to the side. (Figure 1) **Caution: Maintain a secure grip on the stretched retention cord when unhooking and slowly relax the tension to avoid injury.**



Figure 1

Figure 2



Step 2 - Remove the two (2) 1/2" detent ring pins, carefully unfold the steps by spreading the ends until the assembly is laying flat, and insert the pins through the 1/2" holes adjacent to the 1/2" pivot pins. (Figure 2) **Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.** **Caution: Do not twist or torque the assembly during Steps 2 and 3.**

Step 3 - **This step will likely take several iterations.** The amount the lower mounting arms extend out of the lower mounting arm sleeves and the angle formed by the brace arm connection will vary depending upon the boat's swim ladder angle. Remove the four (4) 1/4" detent ring pins from the lower mounting arm sleeves. Slide the lower mounting arm out of the sleeve (if necessary), swing the brace arms to line up connector holes in with one of the middle adjustment holes in the lower mounting arms, and reinsert the pins through the 1/4" holes in both arms. When finished, there should be two (2) pins where the brace arms connect and the other two (2) pins should be positioned through the holes in the mounting arm sleeve closest to the hook. (Figure 3) **Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.**



Figure 3



Figure 4

Step 4 - Lift the assembly into place by positioning the lower mounting arm hooks on a lower cross-member of the boat swim ladder (typically the second or third rung from the top), retract the spring-loaded upper mounting arms, pivot the steps toward the boat swim ladder to position the upper mounting arm hooks under the upper cross-member of the boat swim ladder (typically the top rung or pivot bar), and engage the upper mounting arm hooks on the upper cross-member by slowly and carefully releasing the upper mounting arms. (Figure 4) **Caution: Be careful not to place any body parts in the path of the spring-loaded upper mounting arms.** Note: If the hooks are positioned wider than the cross-member width, perform the width adjustment (Page 6) first.



Figure 5

Step 5 - If the steps are not approximately level (assembly at about a 45 degree angle), remove the assembly by reversing Step 4, reposition the brace arms and lower mounting arms in a different set of adjustment holes in the lower mounting arm sleeves, and remount the assembly. (Figure 5) Repeat until the assembly steps are approximately level. The adjustment flexibility also allows for some positioning of the top step. Once the correct adjustment holes have been identified for the pins, mark the holes for quick set-up next time.

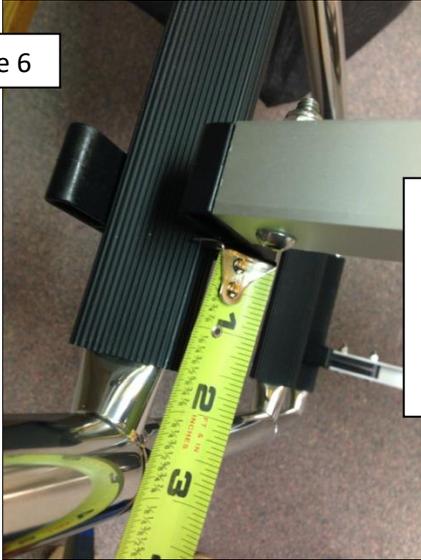


While unlikely, if the appropriate assembly angle cannot be achieved as outlined above, it may be necessary to reposition the lower mounting arms and/or braces. If repositioning the arms, place the assembly on a horizontal surface with the arms pointing upward. Remove the 5/16" shoulder bolts on both sides using a 5/32" hex driver. Move the lower mounting arm assembly and/or brace assembly to a different set of mounting holes in the runners and repeat Steps 3, 4 and 5.

Width

Boat swim ladders have different widths. The hooks/mounting arms are preset from the factory to a width of 8-1/2", but are adjustable for width to maximize stability and minimize relative movement. To determine and adjust the width:

Figure 6



Step 1 - With the step assembly mounted on the ladder, measure the gap, if any, between the hooks and the boat swim ladder side frames on both sides of each mounting cross-member. It is highly recommended that at least one set of hooks (upper or lower) be positioned against the swim ladder side frames to ensure stability. (Figure 6)

Step 2 - Remove the assembly from the boat swim ladder and place the assembly on a horizontal surface with the arms pointing upward. Loosen the arm attachment and spacer nuts using a 7/16" socket driver. Splitting the difference in total gap from the measurements taken in Step 1, slide the mounting arms outward equally and retighten the nuts. The gap between the arms and runners on both sides should be equal. (Figure 7)

Figure 7

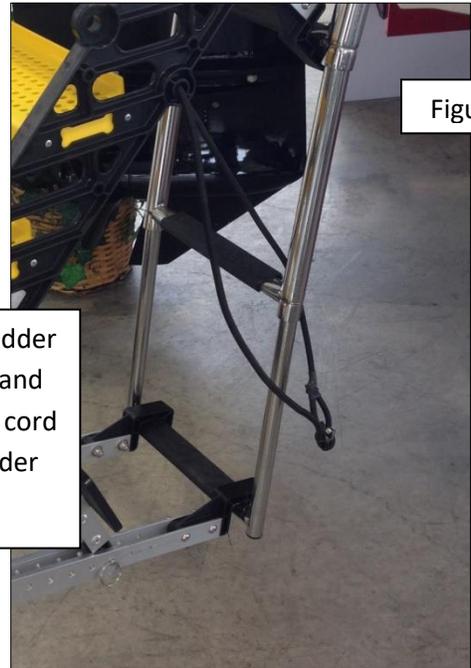


Figure 8



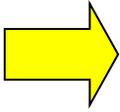
Step 3 - Remount the step assembly and check for fit. There should be less than 1/2" relative movement of the step assembly to the boat swim ladder in all directions. (Figure 8)

Figure 9



Step 4 - Pull the loop end of the retention cord around the boat swim ladder side frame and connect back to the hook end. Make sure there is slack and check to be sure it will not be pinched or abraded in use. The retention cord can be threaded in the assembly to facilitate which side of the swim ladder you wish to float the ladder on when not attached. (Figure 9)

Congratulations! You have completed the initial setup of WAG Boarding Steps for your boat and are now ready for hours of enjoyment without ever needing to use tools again. To remove the assembly and prepare for your first use, refer to the removal instructions in the next section.



Installation/Removal After Completing Initial Setup

Tools Required: none

Once your WAG Boarding Steps have been properly fitted for your boat, installation, removal and storage are simple and require no tools.

***Always inspect equipment and boat for damage or loose fasteners prior to use.
Correct as necessary.***

Installation from the storage and transport configuration:

Step 1 - Remove the folded assembly from its packaging, stand on end with the hooks down, unhook the retention cord and let hang to the side. (Figure 10)

Caution: *Maintain a secure grip on the stretched retention cord when unhooking and slowly relax the tension to avoid injury.*



Figure 10

Figure 11



Step 2 - Remove the two (2) 1/2" detent ring pins, unfold the steps by spreading the ends, and insert the pins through the 1/2" holes adjacent to the 1/2" pivot pins. (Figure 11) *Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.* **Caution:** *Do not twist or torque the assembly during Steps 2 and 3.*

Step 3 - Remove the four (4) 1/4" detent ring pins from the lower mounting arm sleeves, extend the mounting arms (if necessary) and swing the brace arms to line up connector holes with the desired adjustment holes in the lower mounting arms identified during the initial setup, and reinsert the pins through the previously marked 1/4" holes in both arms. (Figure 12) *Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.*



Figure 12



Figure 13

Step 4 - Lift the assembly into place by positioning the lower mounting arm hooks on the lower cross-member of the boat swim ladder (identified during initial setup), retract the spring-loaded upper mounting arms, pivot the steps toward the boat swim ladder to position the upper mounting arm hooks under the upper cross-member of the boat swim ladder (identified during initial setup), and engage the upper mounting arm hooks on the upper cross-member by slowly and carefully releasing the upper mounting arms. (Figure 13) **Caution: Be careful not to place any body parts in the path of the spring-loaded upper mounting arms.**

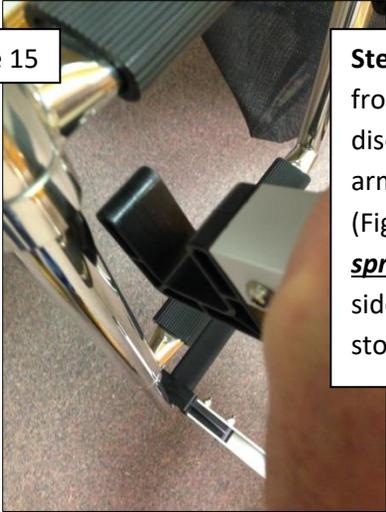


Figure 14

Step 5 - Pull the loop end of the retention cord around the boat swim ladder side frame and connect back to the hook end. Make sure there is slack and check to be sure it will not be pinched or abraded in use. (Figure 14)

Removal from the installed configuration:

Figure 15



Step 1 - Retract the spring-loaded upper mounting arms, pivot the steps away from the boat swim ladder until the upper mounting arm hooks have disengaged the upper rung, slowly and carefully release the upper mounting arms, and lift the steps off the lower rung and away from the boat swim ladder. (Figure 15) **Caution: Be careful not to place any body parts in the path of the spring-loaded upper mounting arms.** At this point, the steps can float to the side so people can use the boat swim ladder or be removed completely for storage and transport.

Step 2 - Unhook and unwrap the retention cord from the boat swim ladder and lift the steps onto the boat placing them so the mounting arms can be accessed. (Figure 16)



Figure 16

Figure 17



Step 3 - Remove the four (4) 1/4" detent ring pins connecting the lower mounting arms and brace arms. Swing the brace arms so they lie flat against the steps. Slide the lower mounting arms back into the lower mounting arm sleeves, and reinsert the pins through the adjustment holes closest to the hook and closest to the arm attachment. (Figure 17) *Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.* **Caution: Do not twist or torque the assembly during Steps 3 and 4.**

Step 4 - Remove the two (2) 1/2" detent ring pins, fold the steps until the two ends are touching, and insert the pins through the 1/2" holes near the middle of each side. (Figure 4) *Tip: Keep pin rings around fingers while handling to avoid losing the pins.* Stand the folded assembly on end with the hooks down, pull the loop end of the stretched retention cord around the mounting and brace arms and hook to the other end of the cord. (Figure 18) **Caution: Maintain a secure grip on the retention cord while stretching and hooking to avoid injury.**

Figure 18



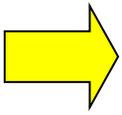
Training

It is highly recommended that you train your dog in shallow water where you can stand to the side as your dog gets used to WAG Boarding Steps. Some dogs may try to wrap their legs around them like a tree trunk or reach up trying to pull themselves up and stick their leg between the steps. Having your dog approach them straight on and spotting them to keep their legs under their chest (like they do stairs at home) will get them comfortable with this new thing they have never seen before. Once they are used to it, they will learn to come in from the side and do it with large objects in their mouth. Periodically check for damage to the equipment and your boat. Remember, WAG Boarding Steps are for **dog use only**.

Care and Maintenance

Your new WAG Boarding Steps are constructed from high-quality materials that should provide years of enjoyment.

- All fasteners are stainless steel (except for the step rivets and washers which are aluminum). Check for loose or missing fasteners prior to use and tighten or replace as necessary.
- The metal parts are anodized aluminum extrusions which offer excellent stiffness for their weight. Periodically check for bent or cracked parts and replace as necessary.
- The plastic parts are formulated for outdoor use and have good impact resistance. Periodically check for cracked parts and replace as necessary. Remove your step assembly when not in use and store out of direct sunlight for maximum life. Rinse with fresh water, if necessary.
- The torsion spring is electropolished stainless steel. Periodically check for damage.
- The retention cord is an elastic shock cord. Never stretch the cord more than fifty (50) percent of its relaxed length. It should be replaced if the hook breaks or fraying of the nylon cover is detected.
- If your dog's toenails tend to push the floatation material out of the step pocket, use adhesive to secure in place. Floatation material should be replaced immediately if damaged or missing. Missing floatation material will allow the unit to sink.



Customer Support

For questions regarding your WAG Boarding Steps or to order replacement parts, please contact our toll-free customer support line at:

1-877-**WAG**-2272 (1-877-924-2272)