



DUCKING STUNTS



If you're already comfortable blasting in the footstraps and gybing, then the duck gybe is one of the first relatively easy freestyle stunts for you, and a useful skill to have under your belt for a freestyle future. By following this article, duck gybing will become easy, so easy in fact many of my higher level guests learn it within their first few attempts!

If you're still learning to gybe, this article also has some fantastic practise points taken directly from my INTuition Dudes and Legends courses, which will greatly improve your rig flipping. (See onshore sequence overleaf.)

THE DUCK GYBE

There are two main aspects of a duck gybe, the TIMING (on these pages) and the FLIPPING (overleaf).



LEFT:

- Bear off onto a mega broad reach.
- Complete the rig flip.
- Then turn the board and do the foot change.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

If you already know the basic routine of how to flip the rig (see overleaf) then making a duck gybe will all come down to your timing and approach.

DUCKING



APPROACH

The faster you are going, the lighter the rig feels, so the easier it is to flip. So despite your gut instinct, don't slow down, as that just creates more pull in the rig ensuring an early wipe out.

To keep control on this speedy approach, whether duck gybing or carve gybing, you must increase the weight on the mast foot to stop the board from 'wheeling.'
(INTuition Core Skill- www.guycribb.com/technique/coreskills/downforce)

Achieve this by getting all your weight into the harness by sinking down super low, bending your knees and arms so much your eye level is beneath the boom.

With all your weight in the harness, you should be able to move your back hand freely, sliding it as far back down the boom as possible. This will increase your leverage on the boom, furthering your control.

From this crouched position, you're well prepared to handle the surge of power and speed as you bear off downwind for the gybe.

TIMING

Bear off downwind, pulling hard on your back hand as you go until you're sailing at about 45 – 60 degrees downwind of a normal reach, ideally within about ten to thirty metres.

When you reach this angle sailing downwind unhook* and move your back foot from the back strap, placing it on the leeward rail, as per a normal gybe. (*More experienced gybers might unhook and move their back foot sooner.)

Sometime about now, the rig should go light (because your apparent wind (head wind) is stronger than the true wind, hence they cancel each other out and you have no wind, making the rig feel light.)

This will only happen if you are truly sheeted right in so the boom is parallel to your board. (100% of my guests who see themselves on video not sheeting in, thought they were sheeting in on the water.)

When the rig is light it's easy to flip it.

TIMING - SUMMARY

The best duck gibing tip is not thinking about gybing at all, but to concentrate on flipping the rig whilst you're still on a broad reach. Only once it's completely flipped should you try to carve the board around the rest of the turn.

TROUBLE SHOOTING

- **If the rig isn't going light** as you bear off, then you're probably sheeting out, which strangely keeps the power on during this stage. This is the most common mistake of anyone learning to gybe, and the best solutions are: more downhaul, probably more outhaul, move your harness lines back to where they should be (www.guycribb.com/technique/tuning/harnesslines) and try this routine again, remembering to get lower than you've ever got before!

- **If you find that it's not possible to grab the new side of the boom**, because it's being blown away from you, it's because you flipped the rig too late (the most common duck gibing mistake.)

- **If the mast is hitting the water** and sending you catapulting over the nose of the board, it's because there was still too much power in the sail when you let go with your front hand and the rig was blown straight down in a flash. Sail faster and the rig will be lighter and easier to flip.

There is a chance that the mast hit the water because you weren't pulling the rig back upright soon enough- see final page of this feature for tips.

There is no chance that the mast hit the water because your boom is too long, that's just not a worthy excuse- you can duck gybe almost any size sail. However if your mast is very heavy, or unfortunately if you are very short, flipping the rig does become harder.

- **If you're grabbing the boom on the new side, but being catapulted instantly** then either your hands aren't reaching far enough forwards, or, if they are reaching far enough, then you're probably not pulling the mast back upright soon enough. (See final page of this feature.)

Also, if you're still on a broad reach, you'll need to quickly turn the board round to it's new course, so bank it over by pushing through your toes.

MORE DUCKING STUNTS

This is a variation to the duck gybe, which if you already have some duck gybing skills you should be trying. Sail onto a broad reach, still in the footstraps, keep the board flat, make the rig go light, flip it, then carry on sailing clew first! You have to be pretty physical with this, but it's easier than you think!



SAILING CLEW FIRST TIPS

- Pull very hard on your clew hand, so that the clew is pointing directly into the wind, and sheet out with your mast hand to ditch the power.

- Bring the mast upright.



Finish this trick either by carving the board into a gybe, as I do here, or flipping the rig as I do in the onshore sequence overleaf.





Flip rig early

Get mast back upright asap

FLIPPING HECK!

This is the very best way to learn the rig flip routine for a duck gybe and a carve gybe. If you think you'll be fine just learning it on the water without any onshore practise, you're fooling yourself. There's a heap of vital actions here that are easily learned on the beach, but virtually impossible to learn when you're doing 30mph with spray in your face mid gybe.

This way of learning is part of my highly evolved INTuition Muscle Memory which has enabled hundreds of people to understand and master both carve and duck gibling after about an hour of onshore practise, rather than years of trial and error on the water.

Rig a small sail (4m to 5m), in virtually zero wind in your garden, position your board on a broad reach and point your front foot forwards. If the neighbours ask you what you're doing, tell them "They're ducking stunts."

From a normal sailing position, firstly you'll learn the duck gybe rig flip (first five images in sequence.) Then you'll find your self in the clew first position, which simulates the exit from a normal gybe, so now you can practise the carve gybe rig flip (last five images in sequence).

By flipping the rig time and time again, following your INTuition INFO in these pics, you'll develop your INTuition Muscle Memory. The more practise you do on land, the easier it will be for these actions to happen INTuitively on the water.

During my INTuition courses much more is divulged than I have room for here, but try to copy these actions as best you can, and enjoy these ducking stunts.

Normal sailing position.

Slide back hand right back.

Grab the very back of the boom arm with your old front hand (crossing over the top of your back hand.)

Pull exceptionally hard on this hand to prevent the mast from falling down, lifting the rig back upright (see last page of feature).

Grab the boom as far forwards as possible on the new side with both hands, moving them quickly forwards until your front hand is in it's normal sailing position by pulling the mast more upright. Try to keep all the power of the rig in your clew hand, see 'Clew First Sailing Tips' on previous page.



Return to normal sailing position and repeat

ducking



Keep board banked over to keep it turning
(Note: when learning you shouldn't turn as tightly as I do in this sequence)

FOOTWORK

As you can see the foot change is done well after the rig flip and only after the board has turned all the way round to it's new course, just like a 'strap-to-strap' gybe. If you've been following the INTuition series you'll know the correct footwork is critical to successful gybing and is the second biggest error would-be gybers make.



Left: Twist your front foot out of the strap and onto the inside rail, before stepping forwards with your back foot. Only by doing the Twist can you keep the board banked over and turning through-out the gybe.

The correct footwork, which I've called 'The Twist,' was first seen in my INTuition feature in Windsurf July 2002. It's critical for gybing, tacking and in much of freestyle, so get it under your belt!
www.guycrabb.com/technique/coreskills/thetwist

Begin to rotate the rig. If there is any wind in your sail it will want to flip, just like in a carve gybe.

Boomshaka! www.guycrabb.com/technique/coreskills/boomshaka (Slide your mast hand right to the very front of the boom, bringing the mast vertical.)

Your old back hand reaches around to the new side of the boom, as far back as possible. Note how I'm reaching underneath my 'Boomshaka' hand to stay low with bent legs, instead of reaching over the top which would make me stand upright and blow the gybe.

Grab the boom just behind the back harness line, not too far back.

Missing Link to exit and back to square one. (www.guycrabb.com/technique/coreskills/missinglink) Repeat over and over until these movements become INTuitive and you can do the carve gibing routine without looking at your hands.



WARNING: Do not practise the on shore routine in over ten knots. It is best practised firstly in zero wind.

Return to normal sailing position and repeat

getting it

FLIPPING DANGEROUS?

The duck gybe is arguably easier than a conventional gybe, mostly because the handwork and footwork actions are so separate, you get some time to think. It's best learned with about a 5.0m to 6.0m sail.

If the rig hits the water at full speed, everything will stop dead, except you, who'll go flying clear ahead of everything with a splash and a laugh and zero risk of injury.

The only thing to really watch out for is stabbing yourself in the head with the bottom batten during the flip. Avoid it by practising the rig flip ashore.

GETTING IT UP!

Another important aspect of the duck is getting the mast back upright as soon as possible.

There is no ducking action in a duck gybe, more of a 'bobbing' action of the rig. Dropping the rig right down on one side of you, then flipping it back up the other. With the rig's momentum falling down, you need serious strength to pull it back up.

Practise this yanking action ashore until you can really throw the rig right upright over your shoulder, catching the boom on the new side all the way up in front of the harness lines.



Even once you've caught the new side of the boom, continue bringing the mast upright, or even raking it back, as it will enable a smoother exit from the gybe.



LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING

As with all manoeuvres, look to the exit if you want any chance of getting there.

DUCKING STUNTS SUMMARY

Bear off further and further onto a broad reach until the rig goes light, then flip it, yanking the mast back upright before turning the board around the corner. Try it at home first, then go for it on the water before you get any older.

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