

THE RUSSIAN GIRLS

One of the most important Core Skills in windsurfing is to look where you want to go, or to look upwind.

Looking where you want to go, instead of at your hands or feet, helps you survive manoeuvres, just like driving a car...

Looking upwind provides you with the information you need, so as to be able to anticipate what's about to happen next. Looking for gusts is especially important to prevent catapulting and to help your early planing. Also by looking upwind, you tend to head in that direction, which is better than drifting downwind.

In Turkey during a recent INtuition course, a large group of Russian windsurfers were sailing from a centre a few doors upwind of ours. Escorting the windsurfers were about

thirty stunning Russian girls, so stunning, no one could keep their eyes off them. Which was a good thing, as I needed a point of reference upwind for my guests to focus on.

Wherever you're windsurfing from, have a look straight into the eye of the wind and find a reference point you can look at whilst you're on the water. Hopefully you'll find something as attractive as the Russian girls, but it'll more likely be a power station.

Grab another couple of reference points on the end of each reach too, ie, straight ahead of you when you're blasting, as these are especially good for improving your gybes and waterstarts.

AWARENESS:

By admiring the scenery around you, instead of watching your hands or feet, you naturally have a better awareness of the wind.

Whereas looking at your hands, results in the following disasters:

- x Your eye's focal range is shortened which ruins your balance.
- x As the rig flips you are very likely to swing the rig behind you and end up facing in reverse.
- x You're likely to be catapulted.

None of which are very cool in front of the Russian girls and all of which can be eradicated by looking at them instead of at your hands. Hey, no excuses; your boom's symmetrical, stop looking at your hands!

It goes without saying, looking at your feet shares many of the same issues: however in some moves, a quick glance down to make sure you're feet are in the right place (usually on the centre line) is worthwhile, but only if glanced at for a split second.

GYBING SEQUENCE:

Looking towards the exit of your gybe helps throw the rig forwards, enabling planing exits.

If I had looked at my hands during the flip here, I would have effectively been looking in reverse and so probably would have gone into reverse!



GYBING SEQUENCE



WATERSTARTING:

Do you ever get catapulted trying to waterstart? Or immediately after getting up onto your board?

Chances are it's because you're spending too long looking at your board. Next time, look where you want to go, with only a split-second glance at the board to put your foot on.



WATERSTARTING

TACKING AND FREESTYLING:

'Spotting' is a trick used in dancing to help spin around. Spin your head to 'spot' a reference point and your body follows round.

Use this technique in pretty much every freestyle trick and tacking, usually using the reference point upwind (Russian girls) as your 'spot.'



Cribby trying to dance on the beach

WAVE

WAVE RIDING:

Spot the section of the wave you want to smack, throw your life at it and look back towards the beach to help turn back that way.

Don't look behind you to see how big your spray was; let your mates see that. Obviously there's way more to it than that, but this sequence clearly shows the importance of looking ahead of the turns.



WAVE RIDING

WAVE

LOOPS AND 360'S

LOOPS AND 360'S

Just keep looking ahead of where you want to go and your body will follow round.



LOOPS AND 360'S

BLASTING:

Look upwind and that's where you'll go, whether you're planing or not.



BLASTING

SUMMARY

Looking ahead of the turns helps to twist your body to face the exits. It is the combination of this better stance (facing where you want to go) and improved awareness by looking around that gives you better balance, and therefore credibility with the Russian Girls, or power stations, depending where you windsurf.

I could easily waffle on more in depth about this subject, but at the end of the day, the point is start looking forwards and upwind, and many of the moves you're currently failing will be significantly improved. Simple but effective.

Use INTuition's 'Threesome' learning process for the fastest results:

Practise the moves ashore on a tiny rig (muscle memory), then afloat on a big board with a small sail (slow motion), then the high wind move (full speed) comes INTuitively!

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