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INTUITION

'LOOK DEPRESSED!'

Look Depressed is a refreshingly practical technique for sailing upwind on any board when you're not planing, whether beginner or expert. I call it 'Look Depressed' as it combines twisting your body to 'look' upwind and 'depressing' the rail of the board to stop you slipping sideways (especially useful since most boards don't have 'daggerboards'.) Plus there's the 'depressing' reality that most windsurfers get washed or blown downwind, at least until now.

It's ideal for every sailor on any size board, in all wind strengths. Use your existing skills like raking the rig back, to turn the board onto an upwind direction.



Key points: Twist your body to look upwind and depress the windward rail.



wind

1. Correct feet position for Look Depressed; front foot well in front of the mast foot pointing directly forwards, back foot pointing slightly forwards. Place feet in this position as you start turning into the wind.



2. Your normal feet position, unsuitable for Look Depressed.



3. The nose of the board should only just ride above the surface. If it's not, move both feet further forwards.



4. Hang low in stronger winds.



5. Pull down by pointing elbows down in light winds.



Downforce: Two different ways of creating what I call 'Downforce' for stability at low speeds. Downforce is commonly known as 'mast foot pressure' and is basically suspending your weight on the rig, instead of supporting it on your feet. The more weight you can suspend on the rig, the more stable your windsurfing becomes. If you have a waist harness and/or long lines, you can hook in to maximise the Downforce and still **Look Depressed**.

6. As you twist to face the wind one often accidentally 'sheets out,' so be sure to keep the rig trimmed or 'sheeted in' sufficiently to keep the power on, as I clearly am bending my back arm in this photo.



COMMON MISTAKES:

7. Tail sliding downwind.



8. Nose sliding downwind.



The tail slides downwind when too much weight is on back foot or you've lost all forward momentum. Lean the rig forwards, transferring weight onto front foot to get speed up again. If the nose slides downwind, twist body to face upwind and rake the rig back.

How Depressed?

The windier it is the more sideways pull there is, therefore the more depressed the rail should be to prevent you from slipping downwind. I often have the board tipped over to about 45 degrees.

When To Look Depressed.

A great time to use this technique is in gusty conditions. Rather than just drifting on a reach waiting for the next gust, drift upwind, Looking Depressed. By travelling upwind you'll arrive at the next gust sooner and have more room and confidence to bear off downwind to accelerate, finally putting a smile on your face.

Where's Upwind?

Point your board about forty-five degrees off the eye of the wind. A good indicator of the wind is the lines of chop on the surface of the water. Check that the front windward rail of your board is slicing almost straight through the chop, not hitting it side on. (See pictures 1 and 4.) After some practice, expect to be able to sail as much as thirty degrees off the wind.

Summary.

I'd recommend always trying to point the board more upwind to really test your limits, but risking grinding to a halt if you don't keep the power in the sail.