

# FOOTSTRAPS

SLIP INTO SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE!



This month's INTuition is for everyone trying to get into their footstraps, with all the info you could possibly need taken directly from Cribby's INTuition 'Dudes' experiences.

Not merely carrying handles, footstraps are positioned to offer you the safest luxury ride a board can offer. This article will show you what position and size they should be and how to slip into both of them for total comfort. It will also highlight the most likely errors you'll encounter on your mission to become a foot-strapping INTuition Dude.

For best results, crack open a beer, sit back on the sofa, visualise the thrills of blasting, tuck into this compulsive reading and study the photos carefully....

Firstly the key points, which are highlighted photographically throughout this feature:

**PUSH THROUGH YOUR TOES:**

Getting your weight as close as possible to the centreline of the board to keep it flat, so you can sail in a straight line, instead of swerving into the wind.

**KEEP THE RIG STEADY AND UPRIGHT:**

Steadying the revs from your engine (the rig) helps keep your balance. Try to 'sheet in' only about one or two inches from the neutral position so there's just enough power to keep you planing, rather than yanking heavily on the backhand and catapulting. Keep the rig stretched out in front of you with the mast upright to help keep the power and the mastfoot pressure on, so you don't grind to a halt.

**STAY LOW:**

Hang low from the boom to get as much of your weight as possible on the rig, thus coming down right onto the mast foot, bang smack in the middle of the board, keeping it flat and planing, (aka INTuition's The Missing Link (Windsurf Mag August 2003), &

INTuition Downforce (Windsurf Mag September 2002)). Only if your weight is suspended from the rig, can you comfortably move your feet.

**LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING:**

Don't look down! Practise sliding your feet in and out of your straps in the comfort of your living room until you can do it without looking - don't wait until you're on the wrong side of control in a winter storm.

Looking where you want to go generally takes you there and prevents catapulting. (Check out INTuition 'The Russian Girls,' (Windsurf Mag Oct 2003).)

**BASIC FOOTSTRAP SEQUENCE**

This is the correct sequence for getting into the footstraps. Practise it at home and speed it up until these three footsteps only take one second!



Front foot pointing forwards.



Back foot steps right back.



Front foot slides all the way in.



Back foot slides all the way in.

# FOOTSTRAP SEQUENCE

Turn downwind to accelerate, (technique on next page).



## TO HARNESS OR NOT TO HARNESS?

In this sequence I am clearly hooked in before getting into the straps. This works when:

- You're 100% confident using your harness.
- The wind is steady and strong enough to stay planing.
- The water is flat.

When the water's rougher or the wind is gusty, your kit is thrown all over the place and being hooked into this bucking bronco often results in being flung. Also, if you're not 100% committed to the harness, then when you lift your front leg off the board it's a bit like taking away the brace, which is/was preventing you from catapulting.

In this respect it is often easier, especially for first-timers, to get into both straps before you hook into your harness. A sequence of that technique is found two pages overleaf but shares many of these key points:

Drastically bend the back leg so all your weight sinks down into your harness and increases on your back foot, so you can move your front foot (into front strap).



## FRONT FOOTSTRAP TIP:

1 & 2 Use your back foot to slide board forwards beneath you, a bit like passing a football. This helps getting into the front strap because as you lift your front foot up, the board and front strap slides underneath it, making it easier to reach. Pushing the board forwards also gets it planing quicker.

Now push all your weight through your front toes, so that you can move your back foot.



Back-foot goes into back strap but your weight remains on front toes until board reaches full speed.



At full speed straighten your legs and push through your heels to turn upwind back onto a reach.



**KEY POINTS**

**GET INTO THE FOOTSTRAPS AND HARNESS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE**

I often get on my kit, get into the straps, hook in and *then* get planing. Most people learning will wait until they're at warp speed ten before trying to go for the straps! Try and get in them sooner. In this sequence I'm in both straps and fully planing in about fifteen metres/four seconds.

**TURN DOWNWIND TO INCREASE SPEED**

Push through toes.  
Keep rig/engine steady.  
Stay low.  
Look ahead.

# FOOTSTRAP

## PREPERATION ON THE BEACH

### FOOTSTRAP POSITION:



- 1 Forwards and inboard is okay for total beginners, but not for anyone with any blasting experience.
- 2 Get them back, but keep them inboard. A single back strap is the best option for learning.
- 3 Only experts should use them outboard on slalom or freeride boards for more control at speed.

### FOOTSTRAP SIZE:



- 1 Too small.
- 2 Just right when you can see all your toes.
- 3 Too big, (unless you're an expert wave or freestyle sailor).

### WHICH SCREW HOLE?

If you're over 5'5", use the second screw hole from the front for the front straps and the second screw hole from the back for the back strap.

### TUNING YOUR KIT:

Much of the windsurfing public have tuned their kit to be most comfortable when they're not in the straps, which ruins their chance of getting into the straps altogether. The most common mistakes in tuning for footstraps (and in general) are:

Boom too low. Unless you're under 5'4", your boom should be in the top half of the cut-out. The higher boom will help you get further back on the board whilst keeping your weight on the mast-foot.

Harness lines too far forward. (The back one should be a third of the way down your boom). If your harness lines are too far forwards they rake the rig back, ruining your early planing. (check out Intuition's 'The Truth About Harness Lines', Windsurf Mag Jan 2003)

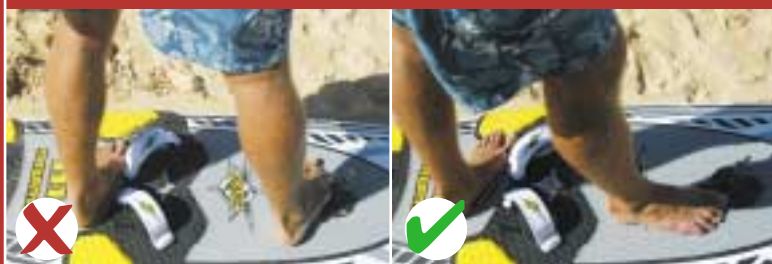
Footstraps in wrong position, (see above).

### FOOTSTRAP SCREWS:



## PREPERATION ON THE WATER

### FEET:



If you suffer from your board swerving into the wind it's most likely to be because your front foot is pointing sideways, therefore your body is facing downwind instead of forwards.

A simple change in your front foot position will be your miraculous saviour of many an ailment. Point it forwards to help face your body forwards!

### HANDS:



Front hand too far forwards rakes the rig back, killing your early planing.

Moving your front hand back is the single best way to increase power to your rig, as it tips the rig forwards and powers up the sail. Make sure you have overhand grip.

### WEIGHT:



Get low, hang well beneath the boom with straight arms and dislocated shoulders, stretching the rig forwards and pulling down into the boom. (aka Intuition Missing Link, Windsurf Mag August 2003)

### TURN DOWNWIND:



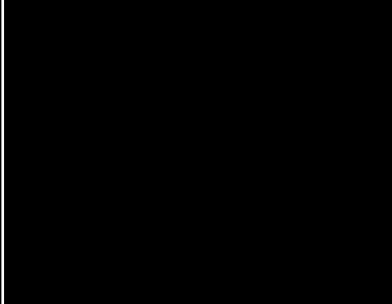
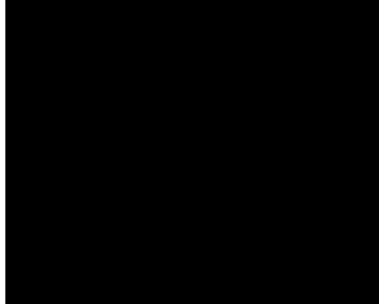
Turning your board downwind onto a 'broad reach' will help you pick up speed and get planing. To turn downwind make sure your hands, feet and weight are in the right place, then tip the rig forwards and push through your front toes. You may already be doing this, but to radically improve the effect also pull the tail of the board underneath you with your back foot, by tensing the back of your thigh muscle. Try this movement on your sofa NOW!

# RIGHT.....

# WRONG

## ✓ RIGHT WAY:

## ✗ WRONG WAY:



Keep rig/engine steady and stretched out in front of you.



Standing too upright puts weight onto your feet.



Stay low and pull down into boom.

Bending the arms rakes the rig back, turning you into the wind and losing power.



Push through toes.

Weight going onto the front heel banks the board over...



Look ahead.

...swerving everything into the wind. Game over.

### GO FOR IT!

Using the footstraps is infinitely safer than trying to cling on with your toes! Once you're strapped to your board, you can hardly fall off and contrary to what you might fear, there is zero risk of injuring your feet in the straps unless you are radically wave or freestyle sailing.

There's only so much you can think about during the rush of acceleration and spray in your face, which is why this article has focussed so much on these four key points:

- Push through the toes. (Keeps the board going straight.)
- Pull down into the boom. (Takes the weight off your feet, making it possible to move them.)
- Keep the rig steady, (to keep the board planing).
- Look where you're going, (to prevent catapulting).

Get on with it – try and get into them within fifteen metres of the beach; don't wait until you're out of control!

### MASSIVE TIP: SAIL NAKED



Are the soles of your feet sensitive, or even ticklish? Yes? Well, they are because they're designed to give your brain heaps of info, rather like your hands. However, I see so many windsurfers covering them up in thick, wobbly rubber boots, eliminating all chance of feeling anything, including the shape and position of your footstraps.

For the sake of learning how to use your footstraps, ditch the rubber fenders and get on with it; even if you only lose them for a few runs, it'll make your footstrapping so much easier.

### THE BACK-FOOT ZAP AND THE ELVIS WIGGLE (INTuition Windsurf Mag Nov/Dec 2002)

Many of you may already be in the front strap, but the backstrap eludes you, so I thought I'd recap on my article published some time ago.

The most important tip for getting into the back strap is INTuition's Back Strap Zap: Slide your back foot in the very split second after your front foot went in. If you leave it

any longer, then as you accelerate, too much weight builds up on the back foot to move it.

This works wonders, but if you miss the boat, then you'll have to resort to INTuition's Elvis Wiggle:

### THE ELVIS WIGGLE



- 1 Feel where the back strap is with your little toe...
- 2 Keeping firmly connected to the board, pivot on your heel pointing your knee into reverse...
- 3 So that your back foot twists into the strap...
- 4 Without daring to look down.

### SLIP INTO SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE

For further info and guidance on slipping into your footstraps, why not join me for some short board tuition in shorts, somewhere sunny and easy going with non-stop perfect conditions?

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Check out this month's advert for the full calendar, or contact INTuition: 01273 842 144 [intuition@guycribb.com](mailto:intuition@guycribb.com)

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