

# MAN OF STEEL

WORDS BY: GUY CRIBB

**Nik Baker-** "Cribby, you can't even touch your toes, you should be more flexible."

**Cribby-** "Flexible? Why the hell would I want to be flexible? I want to be rock solid man, not bloody bendy, how am I supposed to sail fast if I'm made of rubber?"

**O**K I should probably stretch more. BUT the point is windsurfing works better when you are rock solid, not floppy. And although wave sailing and freestyle requires some extreme contortions and flexibility, beneath the flex is a core body strength from tip to toe that is rock solid whenever it can be, especially when you want to sail fast.

### MAN OF STEEL

Formula One and windsurfing both spend millions on carbon to create the lightest stiffest equipment for the fastest acceleration and top speeds. But how much effort do you make to become stiffer? Did you ever realise that if you were 100% carbon, your windsurfing might improve?

I sometimes ask my guests to see the rig as the engine, the board as the wheels and your body as the chassis or drive shaft. For the most efficient power transfer of engine to wheels, your body needs to be rock solid from boom to toes. When a gust hits you, what should bend or distort: you, or your rig? Your rig of course, it's had decades of development to exhaust excess power, allowing you to accelerate like a rocket and stay in control.

What do all speed sailors have in common? Giant legs. Look at Whitey: his thighs are thicker than most people's waists.

He just stands there with them rock solid and no matter how he rigs his sail or whatever the terrain, his legs are 100% inflexible and the rig's energy, some gazillion tonnes of it, is transferred 100% efficiently into his board.

Pile a load of blubber on top of the steely man and you have a serious amount of leverage to hold down any sail in any wind and just get blown faster. (Combined of course with nerves of steel and surprising panache.)

### SUPER TENSE!

Tense your feet, especially your back foot, gripping the board as though your foot is a clenched fist. This will help trim the board flat on the surface reducing drag, help prevent the fin from spinning out and ensure the efficient transfer of power from rig to board, with no flex. Tense your calf muscles, thighs, stomach and back arm as HARD as you can. Locked rock solid, veins bulging: think Arnie Schwarzenegger saying "Grrrrr I am a man of steel, grrrrr, grrrrr!"

This tip alone may be the speed factor you've been missing - pulling the power on with your back hand and channelling it through your ROCK solid body into the board through clenched biceps, buttocks, thighs, calf and back foot. Try it now wherever you are sat, start by gripping the floor with your back toes and work up through your body clenching everything through to your back hand. Grrrrr!

### ACCELERATION

Tense your stomach muscles and push through your toes. Release your front arm until all the power moves to your harness. Even when I'm driving to the beach in my van, my stomach tenses as I accelerate, my grip loosens on the steering wheel and of course I'm 'flooring it' pushing through my toes. This is natural for me having spent 25 years trying to get my board, and van, going faster.



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# INTUITION SLALOM RACING

## TECHNIQUE SERIES

### CRUNCH TIME!

As you crank into a bottom turn or carve gybe, what is keeping the kit held together for a smooth corner - the rubber UJ, or the core strength in you - locking engine, wheels and chassis together?

Check out how my elbows are pointing to my knees in these images - jumping, gybing and blasting overpowered over chop. All windsurfing moves require INTuition's Core Skill: DOWNFORCE - using the core of your body to pull your knees and elbows inwards for stronger, faster, controlled sailing.

NB Be wary of the difference between good gybe entry: letting the front arm and mast fully extend into the turn and bad gybe entry: pulling in on the front arm.

### BENT OR STRAIGHT ARMS?

Fully extending the arms is a dangerous game as once they're extended, there is no give in them: they can't extend any more to absorb a gust. Slightly bent arms are much stronger, giving you more control and the room to extend to depower or power up (conditions / situation depending). Whenever you bend your arms it is vital the elbows point downwards, not out or upwards, to pull down onto the boom, increasing downforce / crunch time. The general guide is: BEND the arms when flipping rigs, sailing overpowered, light wind sailing, or jumping. STRAIGHTEN the arms to put the rig more upright for acceleration.

### CORE!

Core strength training - there is no point in doing weights to develop one muscle at a time: big deal if you can create super strong biceps, what use will they be if you don't have an equal strength throughout your body from boom to footstraps? All the pros train for core strength as so often in windsurfing it will be the core of their body trying to pull the rig and board back together.

There's a fun test you can do next time you hit the third bottle of wine at a dinner party - ask a guest to lie on the floor totally floppy and get a few of you to try to pick them up. Bloody hard work. Then get the guest to tense up as stiff as they can be, from head to toe and see how much easier it is to lift them. Remarkable. We tried it on the beach during an INTuition Kids Camp after three cans of fizzy drink.

### SUMMARY

Tense up man, bulge those veins, grit your teeth, stiffer! Stronger! "Grrrr I am a man of steel, grrrr, grrrr!"

Let the rig do the twisting, not you.  
Bent arms are stronger than straight ones.

### Guy Cribb INTuition

The ultimate coaching syllabus designed and delivered exclusively by Guy Cribb, 13x British Champion and our leading windsurfing coach with unique UK and worldwide clinics. More info at [www.guycribb.com](http://www.guycribb.com)

For booking enquires email [guy@guycribb.com](mailto:guy@guycribb.com) or phone Planet Windsurf 0870 749 1959

Think 'Vroom Is Always Grrrrrr Rock Aggression,' acronym- VIAGRA, for the ultimate stiffy. Who wrote that?

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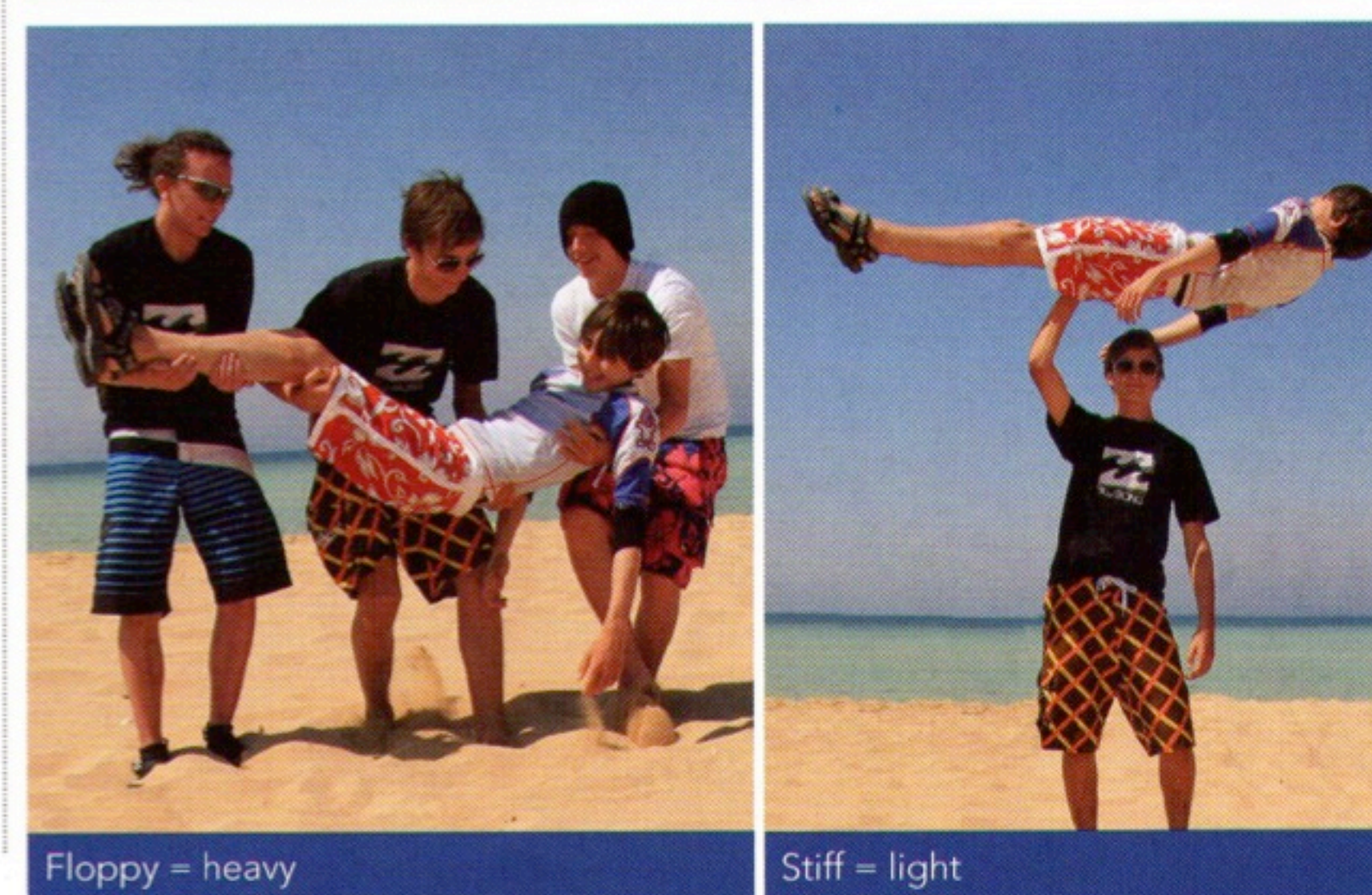
Crunch stance



Crunch gybe



Crunch jump



Floppy = heavy

Stiff = light