



PIC 1

THE MISSING LINK

INTUITION CORE SKILL

The Missing Link is the INTuition Core Skill that gets you planing earlier.

I've called it the Missing Link, as that's exactly what it is; the missing link between wobbling or planing, stalling out of a carve gybe or coming out planing. It also makes waterstarting and getting into the footstraps easier, and gives you power when you need it wave sailing. Plus it looks like the long armed creature that some people think is missing from nature's evolution – the infamous Missing Link. Tell them to look no further, it's right here in INTuition!

As one of my INTuition Core Skills it's handy whether you're a beginner or expert, a Darwinist or creationist, on a long or short board in any amount of wind. The aim of the Missing Link is to help acceleration by increasing power in the rig (by tipping it forwards) and taking weight off your clumsy feet (by hanging off / pulling down into the boom- so that all your weight comes down bang smack in the middle of the board on the mast foot, keeping the board flat for better acceleration).

Both these aspects are achieved if you do the Missing Link correctly. Check out pic 1 and read this.

INTUITION MISSING LINK

FEET

Without accurate foot positioning on the board, your Fang Schuey is up the spout. As you're not planing, your back foot should be directly over the centre line, at right angles to the length of the board.

More importantly, your front foot should be pointing directly towards the nose of the board. This helps twist your body to face where you are going, instead of facing sideways. This is critical to prevent catapulting with the surge of power you're about to experience, and for that matter, crucial throughout windsurfing. To initiate the Missing Link, push through the front toes.

ASS

Get low, try dropping your ass into the water by hanging off the boom and bending your back leg only. The lower you are the less chance there is of being pulled off balance.

MISSING LINK POWER SURGE

Only now your INTuition Fang Schuey is arranged, do you stand a chance of handling the power surges you're about to create.

HANDS / ACCELERATOR

Move your front hand back about a foot, yup, that far; right alongside the front harness line (if it's in the right place), so that your hands are only about a foot apart. This is the biggest early planing tip of all, helping for three reasons:

It helps tip the mast forwards.

It creates distance between you and the rig.

It 'sheets in' the sail, increasing power.

This is the ultimate accelerator, try it next time you go sailing, whatever the wind. Also try holding the boom by your very fingertips to further increase your reach.

SHOULDERS AND BACK

Dislocate the shoulders and spine, stretching your hands as far away from you as humanly (or pre-humanly) possible, stretching your 'lats' (wing muscles).

BODY

With your current experience, the chances are you've adopted the Missing Link stance perfectly, (you can practice it hanging off banisters, door handles, bars etc.) However to truly master it, you need to remember your objective: more power!

MIND

Increase power by tipping the rig right forwards until you're on the verge of being catapulted, then sheet in!

MISSING LINK TO GET PLANING

Use this INTuition Core Skill to get planing, but only when you know there's enough wind to get going. Until that moment, you could be 'Looking Depressed' (INTuition technique for sailing upwind when not planing – see Windsurf Magazine, May 2002) or just hanging in there, relaxing in your harness. It is not advisable to hang out in the Missing Link position for more than about ten seconds at a time otherwise you'll get knackered.

HAZZA

MISSING LINK: THE HAZZARDS

BLASTING DOWNWIND

It's likely that the Missing Link will send you careering off downwind. To counteract this when the board is planing, bank the board to windward by weighting your back heel and look upwind. (See INTuition Upwind technique feature in Windsurf Magazine's March 2003 issue.

Once the board's planing, you should quickly get into the footstraps and harness anyway. If you're not planing, try pumping. If you're still not planing stop the Missing Link and just cruise upwind until the next gust.

MUSCLING IT

Hang off the boom using your weight not your strength. Go hang from your banisters now, using weight not strength, stretching and relaxing your back and arms. Then try hanging there with your arms bent, using your muscles (the wrong way).

Because the rig is pulling against you, or fighting against you if it's not rigged right, there's a strong chance you'll pull back and fight it, using your muscles. Either way, the tip to stop using your muscles is find the 'neutral position' of the rig, where it's sheeted right out with no wind in it. From there, provided you have the right size sail for the conditions, you need only sheet in (pulling on the back hand) about two inches and the sail should fill with enough power. You can do this by simply hanging off the boom in the Missing Link.

PIC 2



MISSING LINK TO PUMP

The best tip of all for learning how to pump is to do the Missing Link. That in itself is often enough to get you planing, but if not, it's the correct starting position for your first pump anyway, which should be a powerful long tug with the back hand rather than lots of pathetic smaller thrusts.

MISSING LINK IN CARVE GYBES

If you're already at the level to potentially be able to come out of a carve gybe planing (controlled smooth entry and correct footwork) the rig flip and the Missing Link should be combined for a planing exit. Pics 2, 3 and 4.

PIC 3



PIC 4



MISSING

PIC 6



Maybe you often get around your gybe with your hair dry, but without planing out of the turn. There are a number of potential reasons for this, but I'm only going to concentrate on one here – the Missing Link, and in this respect I have to assume everything else is cool in your gybes...

After you've staggered round and ground to halt, no doubt you'll eventually do the Missing Link to get going again. Well, I'm suggesting that whilst you flip the rig, you start going into the Missing Link then, some seconds earlier than you previously would have, keeping radically low with bent knees and drastically throwing the rig forwards.

Two reasons why the Missing Link helps planing gybes:

Lower centre of gravity (to handle the power surge and absorb chop)
To position the rig far enough forwards to increase power and stay planing.

Simple as that, do the Missing Link whilst flipping the rig! Yeah right, as if there's not enough chaos anyway. What you should do is get out more in light winds to practice these movements. Much of my coaching program is based on Muscle Memory, the repetition of movements until they're as intuitive as walking. First practiced onshore in a really easy environment, then in light winds in

INtuition Slow Motion. So, get out tonight, it's sunny, not dark until 10pm, rig a 5.0m- 6.0m sail on the floatiest board you've got and find solace, escapism, sun tan and improve your windsurfing skills for the next time it's windy! In this case, practising flipping the rig and catching it in the Missing Link position.

MISSING LINK TO STAY PLANING WHILST IN FOOTSTRAPS.

Same principles – get the rig forwards for power and pull down into the boom to take the weight off your feet, pushing through the front toes and possibly pumping.

MISSING LINK TO GET INTO FOOTSTRAPS

Pulling down, or hanging down into the boom, takes the weight off your feet, making them easier to move. Be careful not to rake the rig back or bend the arms whilst going back for the footstraps.

MISSING LINK WATERSTARTING

Stretching your arms to new lengths helps get the rig upright and forwards, creating enough power to pull you from the water even in the lightest of winds. Moving your front hand back is key here, pic 5.

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MISSING LINK WAVE SAILING

When front side wave riding, it's vital to get the power back into the rig during your cut back, so after using a wide grip during a bottom turn (pic 6), slide the back hand right forwards for a good Missing Link in the cut back (pic 7).

MISSING LINK EXITING THE TACK

Tipping the rig forwards helps to turn downwind after the tack and gets your weight down onto the mastfoot instead of on your feet (which are likely to be in the wrong place by the time you've jumped round to the new side.)

PIC 6



SUMMARY

I used to call it 'hung like a monkey', but the Missing Link seems more appropriate. It's worth stretching for it this summer.

For a full week of spiritual, physical and windsurfing enlightenment, join me on an INTuition course abroad with loads of wind, sun and fun for radical improvement to your life and windsurfing.

Stop press: FULLY BOOKED UNTIL SEPTEMBER! New course now open:
Sept 1st: INTuition Dudes in Alacati, Turkey.

Email INTuition@guycribb.com or phone 01273 842 144 for full info on the next INTuition Holiday or to receive INTuition's monthly enewsletter, with all the latest tips, gossip and holiday details before they go to print and get fully booked!

INTuition by Guy Cribb
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PIC 7

