



CRANKING UPWIND

If you've ever watched a truly high level windsurfer in action, you'll notice they don't seem to be effected by the winds strength or direction. Not just powering through gusts and lulls with ease but virtually getting sucked upwind, as though they've done a deal with the wind gods and been blessed with permanent gas.

If you could sail upwind like that, you'd be more confident to go for wider carve gybes, you could come ashore where you set off from, improve your speed in gusty conditions and explore those unknown beaches upwind. And if you're getting into wave sailing, you need to be sailing upwind all the time (except when you're in mid air or wave riding). So do a deal with the wind gods for permanent gas, or read on to get some decent upwind tips, whatever level you're currently at.

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TURNING UPWIND

As with any manoeuvre, one of the main tips is look where you want to go, so look directly into the eye of the wind. Then push down on your back hand and back heel, and you should begin 'turning upwind.'

Pushing down on your back hand rakes the rig back, which helps you turn into the wind.

Pushing down on your back heel banks the board onto its windward edge, foot steering it towards the wind. (Bank left to turn left)

Swinging your weight back towards the tail, helps increase pressure onto the back foot and back hand.

If this doesn't work, or your brain has the capacity to remember another tip, tip the mast towards the eye of the wind.

Turning Upwind should only be attempted once fully planing. Aim to cover a distance of about ten to twenty metres whilst turning.

If it's really hard to bank the board, my guess is you're relatively light on a big widestyle with a large fin. 'Feather' the sail a little (gently sheeting out), and try banking the board it now. That works because when you 'feather' sheet out there's less power, so instead of leaning out, you come inwards standing over the board rather than away from it, which gives you more power to bank. More power to bank eh.

NG UP

Feathering the sail to stand more upright, pushing down on the back hand and back heel to turn into the wind

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UPWIND STANCE

Now that you're sailing upwind, your stance has to adapt to handle the increased chop and slower board speeds by increasing the Downforce*.

Increase the Downforce by leaning forwards, leaning the rig forwards and hanging low into your harness.

STANCE



MAST

Tip the mast as far forwards as possible, but also leaning it slightly towards the eye of the wind.

HEAD

By looking upwind, the whole body naturally twists to face upwind.

HARNESSES

Lean as far forwards and slouch as much of your weight into your harness as possible. The front edge of your harness should be digging right into your rib cage (waist harness) or front hip (seat harness), make it hurt to increase Downforce!

WINDWARD EDGE

On small boards with small fins (under 35cm), trim the board on its windward side, banked over as much as 40 degrees, to stop it from sliding downwind. Slicing through the water like this also smoothes out the chop. (Also see pic 4 overleaf)

On boards with fins over 38cm, the chances are the fin is creating so much sideways resistance, you don't need to dig the rail in to stop you from sliding sideways, so trim the board flat.

BACK LEG

Keep your back leg totally straight and in line with your spine. Do not bend at the waist to lean forwards, just bend your front leg. (Also see pic 4 overleaf)



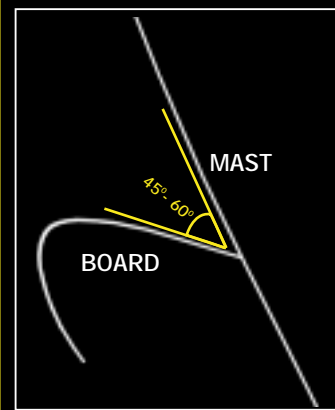
BACK HAND

Slide your back hand right up against the back harness line to get further forwards.

VISUAL TIP

Look at the visual angle between the leeward edge of the board and the mast.

It should appear to be about 45 - 60 degrees when you're cranking upwind.



FRONT FOOT

Roll your front foot onto its little toe side by pointing your front knee forwards.

BACK HEEL

Moving your back heel a little further forwards on the board helps you get your weight further forwards.

WIND

STANCE

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

As much of your weight as possible should be swinging in the harness and so long as the rig is tipping forwards, that weight will be creating Downforce onto the mast foot, keeping you planing. The rest of your weight should be pushing through your back toes and downwards through the front side of your front foot. As the wind or your board speed increases or decreases, your weight gently moves from one foot to the other. When using a big fin, your weight should feel like it's all on the back foot and actually lifting with the front foot.

STUFFING IT!

Really push the limits; see how close you can sail towards the wind before you grind to a halt.



Keep your back leg and spine in a straight line, and bank the board like heck to stop it slipping sideways

INTUITION MUSCLE MEMORY

There's no chance of you remembering all these tips at once, so take this mag to the beach with you next time you go out and come ashore for reference. But you can try some of these tips in the comfort of your own home, for a bit of the old INTuition Muscle Memory. As usual, crack open a beer, put on some Hawaiian tunes and try these referring to the tips above;

Tie a rope to your banisters in the form of harness lines and hook in. Look upwind, which will probably be in the kitchen, virtually behind you. Now lean forwards by bending the front knee. Make sure the harness is digging in so much it hurts!

Now go into the garage and try these tips. With your feet in the straps, standing on your board, twist your back heel slightly further forwards.

Now try rolling your front foot onto its little toe side by pointing your knee forwards.

Grab your boom and slide your back hand up to the back harness line.

Practice on both sides of the board, boom and banisters to complete your dose of INTuition Muscle Memory. (If your partner's out, you could try all this in your lounge.)

MISTAKES AND HAZZARDS

Tipping the mast directly forwards towards the nose (instead of forwards and slightly towards the eye of the wind) is likely to make you turn downwind.

Raking the sail back whilst sailing upwind looses the power and Downforce.

Buying bigger fins. Better technique and being 'powered up' are infinitely more important than fin size to get upwind, until you reach international level competition, when every little bit helps.

Leaning out to battle against the power of the rig pushes sideways into the board, which will make you slide downwind. Standing upright over the board and feathering the sail is more efficient.

Bending forwards at the waist usually results in raking the rig back, instead of keeping the spine and back leg in line, which helps keep the rig upright.

(I heard an old fashioned tip of looking around in front of the mast to help lean forwards. The intention to lean forwards was good, but it often resulted in the sailor just raking the rig back, loosing Downforce.)

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INTuition radically and thoroughly improves your windsurfing, whatever level you're currently at. Taught exclusively by the expertise of British Champions and all round quality motors Cribby and Shawna, at the best venues worldwide, at the right time of year, with 24/7 entertainment and windsurfing for all INTuition levels;

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