



VULCAN

by Guy Cribb INTuition Godfather.

The Vulcan. INTuition going boldly where no one has gone before!

You could say the Vulcan is the fourth challenge on route to windsurfing's Holy Grail (non-existent perfection in windsurfing). Your first challenge was learning to windsurf, the second and arguably hardest challenge – the waterstart, then as if getting into the footstraps wasn't tough enough, once you could use them you had to get out of them and turn around, scrambling from one side of your board to the other learning to carve gybe. And now if you're already that incredibly accomplished windsurfer able to carve gybe, maybe chop hop or forward loop, to get respect in the modern freestyle world, you've got to turn around in mid air, perhaps the hardest challenge yet – the Vulcan.

Who, why or when someone called it the Vulcan I don't claim to know, but learning the Vulcan, this is something I know about, having become one of those windsurfers to drag myself over that frustrating hurdle.

It can take anywhere from a few days to a few years to pull off. I cracked it in around 2000, but some years later when I was learning to spock, I realised I hadn't really ever totally sussed vulcans and my spocks were hindered as a result. Not to mention I could only do them in one direction.

The Vulcan is the key move that enables you to enter modern freestyle as every aerial trick from the new school begins with something similar to a Vulcan - Spocks, Grubbys, Flakas and even Willy-Skippers etc are all far easier than you think once you've sussed the Vulcan. My INTuition Stylemaster series will take you into those realms over the next months, but for now, here's the absolute gospel on the Vulcan.

Using the photos over the next pages you'll see what goes on, but the basic event is this:

Whilst fully planing, spin the board 180 degrees in mid-air and land with the board sliding in reverse, still in your footstraps. Flip the rig halfway round, grind to a halt, switch your feet to the new side and sail back the way you came from, completing a ludicrous but very credible alternative to the tack or gybe.

The combination of strength, fast reactions and agility with thorough basic freestyle skills enables only the most dedicated windsurfers to master the Vulcan, which is why the whole world of freestyle windsurfing has been revolutionised and now dominated by fearless radical kids who sail literally every day in perfect conditions and why probably less than 1% of windsurfers can Vulcan. However, using your INTuition, this feature will let you step into that 1% Earthlings, as this is your very real chance to learn to Vulcan.

If you're familiar with INTuition you'll know windsurfing coaching should be broken down into achievable bite sized chunks, and there are distinct mouthfuls to this move, all explained in this feature. Chomp by chomp I'm going to prepare you better than ever for lift off, and make Vulcans a very realistic goal for you this year.

VULCAN VITAL STATISTICS

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT VULCANS IS POPPING, NOT CHOP HOPPING

Pop/bounce/cork/spring/bunny hop the board off the water. Do not do a traditional chop hop because this sends the nose of the board skyward, when in order to Vulcan you need to dig the nose downwards into the water.

Popping the tail out of the water and lifting it high under your butt helps push the nose downwards into the water. With the nose dug in, the tail catapults around to land smoothly in reverse. This, Earthlings, is the trickiest part of the move to get used to, as it's so different from the traditional chop hop that you're probably currently initiating your Vulcan attempts from.

Furthermore 'popping' keeps you directly above the board whilst it spins underneath you, whereas a 'chop hop' lifts the board out in front of you and gives you no chance of digging the nose in. And, if you're still not convinced, a standard chop hop would turn the board slightly into the wind before take off, which is only going to increase how far round you have to spin it.

So pop/bounce/cork/spring the board out of the water by leaning forwards directly above it, rather than leaning back on take off. Sailing onto a broad reach will help pull you forwards over the board before popping.

INTUITION STYLEMASTER VULCAN CRIBBY



✓
Leaning forwards, totally above board, pop it out of water.



✓
Lift tail high and push nose downwards with front hand.



✓
The nose catches so the board spins around softly.

SUMMARY –

a smooth move because I was leaning forwards over the mast foot before lift off and stayed forwards throughout.

INTUITION STYLEMASTER EARTHLING ALI.



✗
Go for monster height by leaning back and throwing board up in front (chop hop).



✗
Can't push nose down because board was thrown out in front instead of lifted underneath.



✗
Lands heavily on the rail breaking both ankles (well at least that's what it feels like.)

SUMMARY –

could've been a beauty because timing and attitude is great, but because move started from traditional chop hop leaning back, Ali didn't stand a chance on this one.

Popping the board from the water is similar to 'ollieing' a skate board, 'bunny hopping' a bicycle or even as basic as doing a normal standing jump in your living room. They all basically go like this:

Crouch down bending the knees.
Spring upwards by sharply extending the legs.
Tuck legs up underneath.

More INfo at
guycribb.com/technique/coreskills/down-force

TOP OF THE POPS



Lean forwards towards mastfoot and point your elbows down, pulling down into the boom, spring loading everything ready for lift off.



Push down sharply through your legs, sinking the board like a cork.



Pull tail up as high as possible with your backfoot by pushing down through front hand.

BOOMSHAKA!

Because you are about to flip the rig, slide your front hand to the very front of the boom before take off. This sliding movement of your front hand is called Boomshaka! In the Vulcan the Boomshaka helps in two ways – firstly it pulls you forwards on the board, more over the mast foot which is crucial. Secondly it enables you to reach around to the new side of the boom easily during the rig flip, which is also vital. You must do a Boomshaka to Vulcan.

Become competent at popping with your front hand in Boomshaka position before trying the Vulcan. "Boomshaka!" is one of my INTuition Core Skills – movements that you use throughout windsurfing whether beginner or expert. To find out why it's called Boomshaka or for more INfo go surf guycribb.com/technique

FLAT WATER AND BROAD REACHING

Flat water makes sliding in reverse smoother/easier and turning onto a broad reach helps get you forwards over the board and encourages you not to 'chop hop.' So turn downwind slightly and start bouncing the board from the water, with a Boomshaka and heaps of Pop.

Once you're comfortable popping the board with a Boomshaka and leaning over the mast foot before take off, you're ready to go for the Vulcan.

(A couple of other skills you can practise in planing or non planing conditions to help your Vulcans are Sailing switch stance (feet in the footstraps on the wrong side of the board) and sailing back-winded. Check out guycribb.com/technique for sailing backwinded tips.)

VULCAN ONSHORE PREPERATION

To Vulcan, you and the board spin around 180 degrees ish. The board turns by the sweeping action of your backfoot (and the nose digging into the water halfway round). Practise this movement in the security of a private room or belted on a dance floor. Note how my back leg spins right around my front foot, but also check out the vital movement of my left hand (front hand), pushing the mast right back in the direction I came from. This, Stylemasters, is crucial.



BODY POPPING VULCAN STYLELY

Getting a feel for the position you're aiming to land in has helped my intrepid INTuition Stylemasters to go boldly where no one has gone before. Develop your INTuition Muscle Memory by positioning your board on a reach / across the wind and get into the downwind footstraps. Keep the sail totally sheeted out / depowered throughout this exercise.

Get your head directly above the mast foot with all your weight pulling down into the boom and on your front foot only. (Tip: lift up into the back strap with your back foot to help lean forwards enough on the stimulator). This is what landing a Vulcan should feel like, yes, leaning that far forwards!



Head over mast foot, pulling down into boom, weight on front foot and boom only.



Head over mast foot, pulling down into mast and boom, weight on front foot and mast only.



Landing tail first or leaning back like this means game over.



BIG FOOTSTRAPS

It's vital to get the toes of your back foot gripping the downwind side of the board to spin it underneath you. This means BIG footstraps, positioned centrally/inboard. Having them huge also allows you to roll your back foot onto the big toe side, helping you lean even further forwards on landing. Having sailed both Ricardo Campello and Swifty's boards who have size 10 feet, you'd be surprised their footstraps were as big as mine with size 13 feet! Huge straps keeps your sole gripping the board with the top of your foot levering against the strap, a truly locked in feel that helps all jumping. If the strap is too tight, then only the ball of your foot is permanently in contact with the board and you can lose control as your heel lifts off.

Ensure your back foot is wedged deep into the footstrap before lift off and practise jumping with huge straps before trying freestyle tricks!

FIN: Use a very small fin (<30cm) ideally a dedicated

freestyle fin as it helps you slide.

Small fins, such as the 20cm one I'm using in these shots, do not hinder your ability to sail a freestyle board upwind. Check out guycribb.com/technique/sailing upwind

A wave fin, or any fin with a long swept back tip, isn't as good at tracking in reverse, so best to use a dedicated freestyle fin that has an upright trailing edge.

BOARD: UK Freestyle Champion Ben Proffitt literally only uses his JP Freestyle 100 (100 litre) whatever the conditions for freestyle. This is because not only is it early planing, it's easy to keep it planing/sliding in reverse, giving him vital extra seconds to slide through tricks. Smaller boards might be easier to handle in strong winds or rough water, but with narrower tails they're prone to catching or sinking the tail when sliding in reverse. Therefore most people master Vulcans on boards around 100litres. Vulcans should certainly not be attempted on boards over 120litres though.

INTUITION STYLEMASTERS – THE VULCAN



Sheet in and sail switch stance until comfortable and ready to change feet.

Pull down into the boom or mast to keep weight off your feet.

Look back to the direction you came from and lean right over mast foot.

Sweep the tail of the board around behind you.

Push down on your front hand and push the mast back the way you came from. This digs the nose in and helps spin the board around.

There's a few crucial things I want you to look out for using all the photos on this page. Using your nut, digging the nose in, the sweeping action of the back foot and the exit. But first check out this section on the handwork.

HANDIWORK

The standard handwork for a Vulcan is to cross your old backhand over the top of your original front hand (Boomshaka hand) to reach the new side of the boom. This helps keep your weight pulling downwards into the rig and therefore onto the mastfoot, ensuring a smooth landing (note how my front elbow is pulling downwards in pic 1)

Crossing underneath stops you from pulling down into boom and your weight will land heavily on your feet, digging the tail in and wiping out (front elbow lifting off in pic 2)

However, when you're learning to Spock (next month) you need to grab the mast and I've found that has encouraged me to get lower and lean forwards even more, helping to land with my weight totally over the mast foot – ideal for super slidey vulcans and spocks. (Pulling down on mast hand in pic 3)

So, to learn Vulcans cross your hands over the top, keeping your weight pulling down into the boom (pic 1), but once you've got them sussed and want to make them super slidey (sliding in reverse for ages) or begin going for Spocks, start grabbing the mast (pic 3).





Pop the board, lifting tail high with back toes.

Point elbows down and crouch down, spring loading board ready for the pop.

Boomshaka and lean forwards.

Wedge back foot deep into footstrap and turn downwind.

INTUITION – USE YOUR NUT

As you prepare for lift off, lean your head forwards over the mast foot. Just before lift off, look back to the direction you were coming from to help spin the board, rig and re-orientate your body.

DIGGING THE NOSE IN

As soon as you're airborne, start pushing down on your front hand to dig the nose in. This is infinitely easier if you are leaning forwards, over the mast foot, as your bodyweight is naturally helping. Also the higher you lift the tail, the lower the nose should go.

SWEEPING THE TAIL AROUND

Gripping with your back toes, spin the board underneath you and keep sweeping it right around behind you, fully extending your back leg on landing. Note how in the far left hand photos of sequence below, even though it looks like I've got the Vulcan in the bag, I'm still sweeping the tail around with pressure through my back toes.

Throughout this action try to pull the mast back in the direction you came from, extending your front arm. This speeds up your rotation of everything (board, body and rig flip).

The combination of extending your back foot and tail around behind you, and leaning the mast back towards the direction you came, over the nose, keeps your bodyweight over the mast foot and on your front foot, right in the middle of the board, giving you balance, a soft landing and Vulcan credibility.

Check out the back foot's movement in 'Body Popping Vulcan Stylely' section earlier.

THE EXIT

The exit is quite INTuitive and the least tricky part of the Vulcan. The key thing is to ensure your weight is leaning right forwards over the mast foot, pulling down into the boom as this keeps you and the board balanced. Neither push too hard, back-winding the sail, nor sheet in too hard, filling it with power; just gently let it flag until you've ground to a halt, then sheet in just a tiny bit to get balanced, still in switch stance. There is no hurry to move away from this switch stance position, but when you do, move quickly stepping right up to the mast foot.



VULCAN KEY POINTS

- Firstly totally suss popping the board up, with your front hand right forwards on the boom.
- Only once you've got that sussed, go for a Vulcan, sweeping your back leg around, pushing down into your front hand.
- Expect to land the board sliding in reverse ish long before developing the reaction time to remember to flip the rig and push the mast back in the direction you came from.
- Never let go of the boom no matter how you land, as there's always a chance of claiming this move even if you've landed underwater!



MOST COMMON MISTAKES:

Crash landing, wiping out tail first, rail first, face first or back slapping.

Results from a chop hop or jumping too high. Get directly over the board by leaning over the mast foot before take off and pop it underneath you, don't jump it! (See comparison pics in Popping section)

Not getting board round far enough. (see pics below)

Look behind you on take off and push down into your Boomshaka hand more to help lift the tail higher. Sweep the tail underneath you more by pulling harder on your back toes.

Landing in reverse but not flipping rig. (see pics below)

This is a typical stage in your learning curve, usually as a result of concentrating so much on getting the board around you forget to flip the rig early enough. As soon as you're reaching this stage, totally forget about the board and concentrate solely on the rig, flipping it as soon as you take off.

It can also be as a result of being too powered up, which makes you lean out more rather than being directly over board on take off, making the whole stunt trickier. Sheet out/depower before lift off so you're more inboard, then go for it.



SUMMARY

Most people trying to Vulcan would spend years trying it from a traditional chop hop and get absolutely nowhere. Sussing the Vulcan is all about the take off, which you can practise time and again without even going for the actual Vulcan. Using your INTuition, the Vulcan is well and truly within your reach, so start 'popping' next time you go sailing and stun your mates with the Vulcan this year, or join me for personal coaching somewhere warm and windy and be elevated into the highest echelons of windsurfing super fast!

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Britain's Most Wanted windsurfing coach, running 24/7 INTuition windsurfing holidays all year round, all over the world with a 98% wind and surf record!

Sail fast, live fast, learn fast. Why hang around on your plateau when you could be an INTuition Stylemaster, Surf God, Dude or Legend in an action packed windsurfing holiday this year?

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Pics by Anna Edwards and Bjorn Suetens.

Opening shot by Nikki McLeary

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