



DRAG QUEEN

by Guy Cribb

This month's INTuition Stylemaster article brings you the body drag, a risk free freestyle trick that anyone planing can try. Technically easier than almost every freestyle trick I've featured so far, but still impressive enough for even world champions to use in their World Cup winning performances (albeit sometimes on a mast high wave at Ho'okipa.)

The body drag basically goes like this-

Blasting along at almost full speed, take your feet off the board and drag them through the water. Still holding onto the boom the power of the rig keeps you zooming along.

Before the drag from your legs grinds you to a halt, pull yourself back onto the board and carry on planing in the same direction.

The body drag involves as little of the body dragging as possible- if you can just keep your feet and shins dragging, rather than your waist, your 'body drag' will be far better.

Pretty straight forward, so this article will be more about persuading you to give it a go, than the intricate detail of the Neandertal techniques needed.

That said, there's a couple of key points that have enabled my INTuition guests to master the body drag virtually instantly and become distinguished INTuition Stylemasters!

KEY POINT

Bend your front arm so much your chin is almost above your front hand before you take your feet off the board. This ensures only your feet and shins touch the water for minimum drag.

A straight front arm would put more of your body into the water, creating more drag grinding you to a halt almost instantly.



WINDSURFING



PULLING OFF A DRAG QUEEN

There's basically three areas to the body drag pictured above- getting off, hanging in there and getting back on.

GETTING OFF (Top Row)

Pull yourself up above the boom with totally bent arms (like doing a pull up.)

Sail on a broad reach.

Take your front foot off the board and point your toes behind you, skimming your shin through the water.

Take your back foot off, pointing your toes.

Arch your back- straightening your legs and pointing your toes for minimal resistance.

GETTING OFF WITH A DRAG QUEEN



HANGING OUT THE BACK OF A DRAG QUEEN



GETTING IT ON WITH A DRAG QUEEN



HANGING IN THERE (Middle Row)

Keep your chin above the boom by pulling down with your arms.

Steering and control comes from three areas-

- Trimming the power with your back hand- if you feel yourself slowing down, sheet in. This is your best means for control.
- How much of your body is dragging- the less drag the easier it is to control your windsurfing kit in the standard way.
- Keeping the rig upright- is more powerful than raking a rig back.

If your waist or harness starts dragging, it's game over. Keeping your arms bent is the best way to reduce this drag.

GETTING BACK ON (Bottom Row)

This is all about timing, which will come from experience. You want to try to increase the power from the rig to help pull you back on board, exactly as you do with a waterstart. However, with spray in your face and the drag on your legs, it's very easy to miss this timing and either be catapulted by the surge of power, or grind to a halt by the drag, both explained overleaf.

Trial and error will help you develop your timing, but the tip is as soon as you feel the surge of power, whether it's when you wanted it or not, use it to pull you back on board.

As there's so much drag at this stage, be prepared to use every ounce of strength you can muster to pull your legs right underneath you onto the board. This is a very strenuous moment and the only technically tricky aspect to this cunning stunt.

DRAG QUEEN. OH DARLING HOW WRONG! TWO WAYS TO SCREW IT UP



Going over the handle bars/ catapulting. Reason- too much power rolling you onto your back and therefore reducing drag, allowing catapult. Result- getting wet.



Grinding to a halt. Reason- not enough power from rig, or strength from you, to pull yourself back onto the board. Result- getting wet.

NUT CRACKER

Gents, be careful doing the body drag in shorts- your crown jewels are likely to bounce along the surface which at speed will feel like dragging them along a cobbled street. Better to have them tucked away in your wetsuit.

SUMMARY

To everyone reading this who can plane in both straps- try the body drag next time you're windsurfing, no excuses. It's one of the first tricks I get my budding Stylemasters to try as it's relatively easy to get quick results from, therefore boosting confidence to go for further tricks.

Try it- what can go wrong!? For your first attempt, unhook, slow down, bend your front arm and drag your front foot off only. Then both feet off on your next attempt and you'll be on route to Stylemaster heaven.

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All pics by Anna Edwards

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