



HELI TACK

by Guy Cribb

THE INTUITION STYLEMASTER SERIES CONTINUES!

The Heli Tack is easy to achieve in light winds but when you're fully powered up, the swing weight of the rig's 360 degree movement (hence the name helicopter tack) can feel extremely heavy and flip very fast. And that's when things can go wrong, so the bulk of this feature concentrates on the flip, the second half of this move.

The first half of the move though, going into the 'back winded position', is relatively straight forward as there's no major movement. See INfo and pics below.

As the Heli tack shares so many characteristics with other cunning stunts from the INtuition Stylemaster Series, go online to guycribb.com/technique and download- Sailing Backwinded (vital reading to accompany this article.)

Further suggested downloads- The Cowboy, Upwind 360, The Twist, Boomshaka and INsight.

HELI TACK- GET INTO IT!

The Heli Tack begins basically like a normal tack where the board passes through the eye of the wind. But then rather than jumping around to the new side, you back wind the sail. Once the board has turned through the wind, or when it's completely facing it's new direction, you'll need to flip the rig 360 degrees, and change your feet from one side of the board to the other.

You can break the 360 rotation into two 180 degree flips. Having two stages gives you more time holding your boom, which is like having a Zimmer frame for your balance.

In the first stage change your feet to the new side and flip the rig 180 degrees, sailing away in the clew first position to regain your balance.

The second stage is then literally identical to the rig flip of a gybe, and the move is complete.

If you've got good balance, or if you're on a big floaty board, you can get both these stages over and done with in one very fast movement.

See overleaf.

FOOTWORK PREPARATION



Normal non planing stance.



Stance to prepare to be back winded- front toes on opposite side of the board.

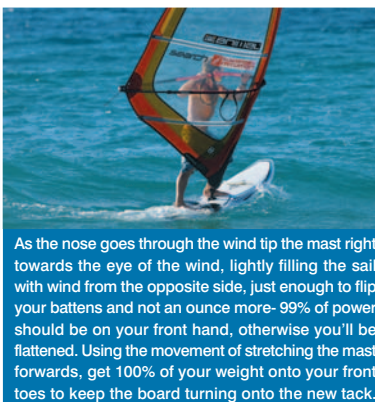
GETTING 'BACK WINDED.'

Get as much speed up as you can in the conditions to give the board the momentum to pass right through the eye of the wind. As the nose goes through the wind keep it moving by getting all your weight onto your front toes, ideally on the new windward side of the board. This action, combined with the wind gently filling the sail from the new side, pushes the board around onto the new tack.

Download Sailing Backwinded from guycribb.com/technique



Look into the eye of the wind so you can check that the board passes through it. Keep the sail powered up to turn faster.



As the nose goes through the wind tip the mast right towards the eye of the wind, lightly filling the sail with wind from the opposite side, just enough to flip your battens and not an ounce more- 99% of power should be on your front hand, otherwise you'll be flattened. Using the movement of stretching the mast forwards, get 100% of your weight onto your front toes to keep the board turning onto the new tack.



Keep all the power only on your front hand, otherwise you'll be flattened. Keep looking into the eye of the wind and make sure the sail remains slightly raked back.

Now that you're sailing back winded, check out the rest of the Heli Tack over the next pages.

HELI TACK- LIGHT WINDS



SPECIAL TECHNICAL SECTION, FOR PEOPLE WITH TOO MUCH TIME

There's a couple of things you might like to know about the move before we get stuck INTO it. If you are familiar with INTuition's Core Skills, like literally all manoeuvres, the heli tack is a simple blend of the old favourites- The Twist, Boomshaka and INsight. But if you want to get really technical with it, it is literally identical in every step to a light wind gybe, only the board goes through the wind instead of downwind...

Or, if you're already a Stylemaster, the heli tack is the same as a push tack, only with a push tack the footwork is over and done with before the rig flip. And is also the same as the Cowboy, except you got back winded from a tack...

If you're not aware of the INTuition program or not already an experienced Stylemaster, probably best to ignore both these two paragraphs and get on with the article from here!

FLIPPING HECK IT'S A HELI TACK!

There's two flipping stages to rotating the sail 360. The first 180 degrees is getting the sail from the back winded position to a clew first position, by pushing the clew right through the eye of the wind. During this stage your feet must move to the new side of the board, as seen in the first four pics of this sequence. Footwork and flip explained below in 'Stage One.'

The next 180 degree's is the same as the gybe rig flip. You can go straight into this flip as I do in the top sequence, or sail clew first for a while before flipping as I do in the bottom sequence. See 'Stage Two.'

FOOT CHANGE

Here's the correct footwork which keeps your weight over the centre line and uses the minimum number of steps to get round. Practise it right now, wherever you are, to get a feeling for it before knocking back a few tequilas and practising it down your local jiggging shop this weekend. The more practise ashore, the more it becomes INTuitive on the water. More INfo at guycribb.com/technique/core_skills/The_Twist

STAGE ONE

By moving your feet to the new side of the board, your body naturally turns 180 degrees and so long as you're still holding the boom, the rig could flip 180 degrees too.

Just before this flip all the rigs power is pushing into your front hand (pic 2), with literally zero on your back hand. To flip the rig from here, transfer all the power onto your back hand, pushing the clew hard through the wind and release all the power from your front hand (pics 3 & 4). A top tip here is to actually pull with your front hand! (pic 4) This flips the rig faster and keeps it in control. For much more INfo check out The Cowboy at guycribb.com/technique, which is a very similar move and concentrates on this area.



Sailing back winded.



Step behind your original back foot, Twist'ing right across the centre line. (You can step in front if you like, but then you exit the turn with your feet closer together.)



Step forwards just in front of mast track.



CLEW FIRST OPTION

If you're going to hang around sailing clew first, the trick is to keep the clew pointing directly into the wind and the mast flagging downwind, so that there's no wind actually filling the sail- this is 'sheeting out' but remember because the rig is the wrong way round (the clew is now the front of the sail) then the mast is sheeted out...

Look upwind and pull your 'clew hand' right in tight to your head- this usually ensures the clew is pointing into the wind, and in light winds, try letting go with your 'mast hand' to ensure the sail is completely sheeted out.

STAGE TWO

From the clew first position the second 180 degree flip is identical to the exit of a gybe-

Boomshaka- (mast vertical) makes flipping lighter.

Insight- (looking forwards) stops the mast from falling behind you.

Oomph- throw the rig forwards to rotate it faster and give you a smooth exit.

INSIGHT

Insight is basically looking where you want to go instead of looking at your hands. Insight not only turns your eyeballs but your whole body to face forwards. This is especially important during the heli tack as it helps your balance and positions the rig correctly. If you're nearly making the heli tack but blowing it right at the end, just by looking forwards or slightly upwind could be the tip that polishes it off for you.

OOOMPF!

Using the Boomshaka hand, throw the rig towards the nose of the board. This speeds up the flip and reduces swing weight. Note how this arm is bent throughout the flip- that's because if your arms go straight, you'll be holding the rig further away from you increasing the swing weight.

Reach as far back down the boom as possible on the new side to keep the rig going forwards into a good accelerating position to exit the move.

BOOMSHAKA!

The rig flips with minimum swing weight when the sail rotates around a vertical mast. The best way to keep the mast vertical is to do a Boomshaka (INtuition Core Skill- sliding your front hand right to the very front of the boom) before you flip the rig. Guycribb.com/technique/core_skills/boomshaka.

By practising Boomshaka in the comfort of your own garden or on the beach before you go out, you should be able to master it without looking at your hands- after all the boom is symmetrical, so there should be no excuses.



Sailing clew first.



With the strength in your 'clew' hand, pull the mast to vertical, whilst sliding your 'mast' hand to the very, very front of the boom.



Keep the mast upright by trying to throw it forwards with the Boomshaka hand. (When the rig is flipping, the swing weight will be pulling it into reverse, which is why you have to try throwing it forwards just to keep it upright.) Reach underneath to new side of boom.

HELI TACK- FLIPPING HECK IT'S WINDY!



Because it's windier everything happens faster. Plus I'm on a smaller board so there's no room for error with my footwork- check out how the board remains totally flat (and therefore stable) by using INtuition Core Skill - The Twist.

The swing weight of the rig in this kind of wind is tremendous, so keeping the mast upright using Boomshaka and putting some Ooompf into it is critical.

WHEN TO FLIP?

If you're as powered up as I am here, you should flip the rig almost as soon the board passes through the eye of the wind, rather than waiting until it's totally facing it's new direction.

If you're underpowered, let the board point to it's new direction before flipping, or break the move into the two stages explained on previous pages, sailing away from the tack in the clew first position to regain balance.

COMMON MISTAKES

Rig flips but clew smacks down heavily into water downwind-
Chances are you're looking at your hands as the rig flips. The rig's swing weight naturally pulls it heavily downwind, but if you look forwards (and twist your body to face forwards, you can get the rig going that way instead of into the water.) You need to put more Ooompf into throwing the mast forwards.

Rig flips heavily and you cant reach the new side of the boom, or you're forced to grab the mast but don't have the strength to stop clew from smacking into water- No Boomshaka! Download 'Boomshaka!' feature from guycribb.com/technique.

As rig spins you spin off the front of your board-
Keep your back foot further back, so that your new front foot doesn't step too far forwards.

As rig flips the tail sinks-

Turn board further round to it's new tack before you flip it, by stretching mast further into the wind increasing weight onto your front foot, before you flip..

Mast whacks you in the shin or foot-

Move your feet earlier, concentrate only on the foot change and the rig flip should follow through.

It should be said here that light kit does make a massive difference to this, and every rig flipping stunt. Check out my Mast Debating article at guycribb.com/technique.



WEIGHT FORWARDS.

Note how stretched my front arm is as the board goes through the eye of the wind- this is to get the weight onto my front toes to keep the board turning, but also to keep better control of the rig in maxed out conditions.

SUMMARY

Lots of talking this month – if I had more time I'd write less! Follow the pic sequence for best results and practise this move in light winds first. Top tip, keep looking into the eye of the wind throughout this move.

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www.guycribb.com

guy@guycribb.com

01273 842 144

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