

## Basic Beginner Windsurfing Lesson for WIPA, ABK, &Tricktionary 3

There are easy repeatable steps you can use to get a beginner up and windsurfing. These steps may be taught on land first, but it is not required if conditions are ideal or the student shows superior athleticism. On the water, you are looking to first get the student to uphaul into a "Basic" position. Once they are comfortable in this "Basic" position they will then balance the sail before adding power to start to sail away. After sailing a reasonable distance, they can return to their basic "basic" position before doing a 180-degree upwind turn and then sailing back to where they started.

1. Uphauling
2. Basic Position with 2 hands on the mast with straight arms and bent knees. The Basic Position is also known as the secure, neutral, or safe positions.
3. Sailing Position with front hand on mast and 2 fingers of the back hand on the balance point of the boom in a number 7 posture.
4. 180 degree turn upwind with mast steering and two steps on the centerline.
5. Tennis Save when falling forwards or leeward off the board.
6. The Hanging Save when falling backward and windward off the board.

### **Some other parts also covered:**

1. Wind, You, Board, then Sail (Getting lined up for a restart.)
2. Safety: Foot impingement, do not let go of the rig (hold on), falling more horizontal than vertical, hands on top of head if you let go of the boom.
3. Rocking the board while having tension on the uphaul.
4. Add direction, clock reference, and upwind steering.

### **World's Best 3 Things To Do In Windsurfing As Opposed To The 3 Worst Habits To Avoid In Windsurfing:**

1. **Independent Arms.** One arm/shoulder pulls and other arm/shoulder pushes *as opposed to* both arms/shoulders pushing or pulling. Can be done with straight arms, too.
2. **Tennis Save.** The Tennis Save is releasing the rig with the back hand and twisting the body and facing in the opposite direction of the rig. *As opposed to* releasing and facing the rig with re-grasping anything. The tennis save option works with normal, clew first, and backwinded. The hand that holds on can be on the mast, clew, uphaul, or boom arm pit. If you are losing the battle to the wind or rig weight, release it and twist away whether sailing normal, clew first, or backwinded.
3. **The Hanging Save** is used with falling backwards and the sail is coming on top of you. Instantly put the head in and below the boom getting into a squat or tucked posture with the butt out whilst extending the front arm and flexing back arm if falling over backwards. *As opposed to* arching backwards and sheeting in with both arms (the incorrect banana save).

### **Steps to getting into the "Basic Position."**

1. Position rig so that the wind is at your back and the board is upwind of the sail. Wind, you, board across the wind, sail.
2. Climb on board and stand up with the front foot touching the UJ. The back foot can be shoulder width and back further which eliminates stepping back.
3. Uphaul the sail using extension of legs and a hip drive towards the sail for strength.
4. Once the sail has cleared the water, the student grabs the mast with both hands and straight arms to take their basic "neutral" position. (Variation: the index finger and middle fingers of the back hand can be placed into the arm pit of the boom clamp. Great for pesky wind starts. Just slide the two fingers down the boom to the balance point and always have two hands on the rig. This is great for the weaker performer and in pesky winds and only requires a slide of the twin fingers into sailing position and beginner always has two hand on the rig.)
5. They can remain in this position for some time and figure out the basic mast/sail steering and balance should they have the patience.

### **Steps into a sailing position.**

1. Step back on the board with the back foot if not already there. If there is a daggerboard they will probably want to place their foot right behind the knob. If the student has superior balance this can also be a great time for them to position their front foot next to the mast base with their toes pointing towards the front of the board.
2. Next the sail needs to be set into position before they add power. Telling the student their goal is to get the mast coming straight up out of the board is usually a good visual. To do so they will release the back hand from the mast and with the front hand remaining in place they can set the sail into position.
3. The free backhand will now reach for the boom at it's widest point, or where the harness lines are, and add power to the sail. Having the student use only two fingers at first is a good way to avoid them feeling overwhelmed by the sails power. As they become more confident the full hand will be used. (Variation: the index finger and middle fingers of the back hand can be placed into the arm pit of the boom clamp. Great for pesky wind starts. Just slide the two fingers down the boom to the balance point and always have two hands on the rig. This is great for the weaker performer and in pesky winds and only requires a slide of the twin fingers into sailing position.)
4. Maintaining a nice Number 7 posture, with an ever so slight sheet in, sail away across the wind.

The **reasons** ABK and WIPA teaches basic windsurfing with the front hand on the mast and two fingers on the boom balance point as opposed to both hands on the boom for initial beginners are:

1. The tendency is to learn feathering and release with the back hand by beginners as opposed to releasing the front hand. The back hand is weakened and wide Harley grips on the booms are not seen. The mast hand has more leverage over the rig.

2. The front hand is ready for the start of a 180 degree turn or tack.
3. The back hand is taught to go on the boom first as in a beach or waterstart sequences.
4. This method works for many beginners in a greater range of winds and swells and for short boards, too.
5. This method does not require a crossover of the front hand in to the arm pit of the boom which can be tougher, higher, and harder for weaker performers.
6. The back hand can assist in balancing the triangle and rig weight by placing two fingers in the boom armpit and then sliding them down to the balance point for feathering and getting underway sailing whilst the front hand is lower and on the mast.
7. This method requires the least of foot and hand placements which works in many wind ranges and swells. It also helps to do the 180 degree turn or tack later with the front hand already on the mast verses having to move it from the boom to the mast.
8. The front hand has great leverage over the back hand which is on the balance point opposite the Center of Effort of the rig which assists mast and sail steering.

### **Problems and Solutions.**

1. **Problem:** The student can't pull the sail out of the water or starts to quickly complain of back pain.

**Solution 1:** This could simply be that the sail is too large or heavy. There is no downside to teaching someone with a tiny sail for their first experience windsurfing. A 3.5 would be the largest sail to teach with and on a windier day a 2.0 for full size adults may be appropriate. For smaller students a 1.5 may be needed.

**Solution 2:** Make sure the student accentuates the drive of their hips towards the sail. The farthest thing from the sail should be their head.

2. **Problem:** In the Neutral position or while sailing a student keeps falling over backwards.

**Solution:** Have the student keep their arms straight. Whenever they bend their arms the rig comes towards them and crowds them for space above the board. It also takes away the weight of the rig to be used as a counter-balance.

3. **Problem:** In the Neutral position or while sailing the student keeps falling towards the sail, or keeps dropping the sail back into the water.

**Solution:** Have the student stand up straight and pull their butt in. This can be a time when you introduce the idea of the "Number 7" stance, or you can tell them that they need to clench their buttocks kind of like they were trying to hold a dime between their cheeks. And yes, this is a good time to add some humor to the lesson as you present this idea.

**Bonus Solution:** Once the student is starting to be able to keep their balance and start to sail, you can introduce the "Tennis Save" to help them recover when they bobble and their butt comes out.

4. **Problem:** The student keeps turning too far upwind or downwind in their Neutral position.

**Solution:** Have them spend some time steering by pushing the rig towards the nose of the board to go downwind and towards the tail to come upwind. When they try to get into their sailing position have them steer to the point where the sail is close to 90 degrees to the board.

5. **Problem:** The student keeps turning upwind as they try to get into a sailing position.

**Solution 1:** Move the mast base farther forward on the board.

**Solution 2:** Have them raise the sail to a point where the mast is not only coming out of the board but starting to block their view of the nose of the board. This may mean they have to bend their front arm, which is not ideal, but some boards just do not steer as well as others.

6. **Problem:** The student keeps turning too far downwind.

**Solution 1:** Move the mast base farther back on the board.

**Solution 2:** There are two common problems that lead to a downwind steering action but often times if a student just focuses on the position of the mast they'll start to catch the problem before it's too late. The two common problems are either a bend of the front arm pulling the rig too far upwind across the board, or a bend at the waist setting the rig too far forward.

Written by Ned Crossley. Derek Rijff wrote the Problems and Solution section. Thanks to Andy Brandt.