

Tacking on a Windsurfer - Ned's Notes!

Tacking is the #1 turn, fundamental turn and is a necessity. It is not an option. A tack is when the nose of the board passes 12 o'clock. In general, a tack is a 180-degree upwind U-turn through the eye of the wind. Or using the wind clock, it is being able to go from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock passing through 12:00 upwind or the other way. Hence, we think of the upwind tacking zig zags as a 180-degree turns (+ -) upwind. Likewise, bearing off to regain speed and then pointing up as high as one can go is another reason why we think of the tack as 180 degrees. In all tacks, one must do a proper "setup" by looking, pre-positioning the hands and feet to one's advantage and most likely that setup will be done outside the NO GO ZONE. The setup is done before the time that one's body exchanges sides and direction upon the centerline. In all tacks, the mast goes from side to side and the windsurfer's body stays over the centerline whilst shifting weight forward and stepping through to face the other side of the board's centerline.

Two fundamental good windsurfing tacks and advanced variations:

- The **short board non-planing or planing tack** without centerboard or with centerboard up like on beginner board. Body steps and moves to other side of boom before board reaches 12 o'clock. **One does not over-sheet the sail.** The front hand is on mast below the boom clamp, the back hand goes boom to boom on exchange. The sail stays back and many times one is backwinded slightly as the board slowly moves through 12 o'clock. "You cannot go too early, but you can go too late." The short board tack can be done on all boards either non-planing or planing. One does not plane out of a short board tack but the good guys make it look like they plane out.
- The **Long board with centerboard down racing tack** is where **the sail is over-sheeted** so that the nose of the board passes through 12 o'clock, then the body steps and turns to the other side of the centerline. The front hand is on the mast, back hand goes boom to boom on the exchange of sides. This can be done on a board without centerboard but as the boards gets smaller, the short board tack is preferred. "You can go to early but not late." The sail is moved forward immediately towards the nose and one drops the head below the boom to bear off to bear off and pop and drop.
- **Some other tacks (non-planing and planing)**- rope tack board 180, basic 180 with 2 hands on the mast, heli-tack, clew first tack, push tack or Hoss tack, nose tack, fin first tack, old school duck tack, new school duck tack, backwinded tack, fin first-clew first tack, etc.

Basic 180 degree turns (simple tacks or U-turns) using mast steering aka mast flagging and doing them with 2 steps. These lead to good tacks above. Mast flagging is using the mast steering and sometimes the clew end of the boom is slightly in the water to turn the board. One tries to use 2 steps just like the tack foot work around the UJ:

- Rope Tack- hands on the rope or uphaul tack using mast steering (tilting the mast to steer board through the 180- degree turn) whilst looking at the nose. Sometimes part of clew stays in the water especially in marginal or no wind conditions. Try to use only two steps to get facing the other side of the centerline.
- 180 Degree Turn from Basic or Secure Position Tack - mast steering using two hands on the mast below boom clamp. Using mast steering, tilt the mast towards the back of the

board to turn the board around into and through the wind while looking at the nose. Try to use only two steps to get facing the other side of the centerline.

- Half and Half tack--Steer the board up towards but short of 12 o'clock while looking at the nose. Then use one of the mast steering method above to finish the last 90+ degrees of the 180-degree turn. First half of the 180-degree turn is sail steering, second half is mast steering with two hands on the mast. Try to use only two steps to get facing the other side of the centerline.
- Simple Mast Jibe or call it the Downwind 180-degree U-turn. This is here because it is another way of turning the board 180-degrees and even though one loses distance downwind, it is a basic way to do a 180 turn U-turn for a beginner who might be able to sail back on their own. It is also a self rescue way going downwind. Release the back hand and tilt the mast to the windward side of board over the nose of the board and the nose will do a downwind mast jib. Sometimes this is the first way of turning 180 degrees and going back and forth.

Again, tacking is the #1 turn, fundamental turn and is a necessity. It is not an option. All the above ways of doing the 180-degree U-turns are necessary to get aligned to begin sailing, to zig zag upwind, to turn in a tight spot, and to tactfully stay up wind. One should always try to stay upwind upon beginning a sail. Distance is a windsurfing enemy in a way, so tack early, stay close to shore, after staying upwind, and the gear checks out, then add distance.