

## Tips for beginning windsurfers

Try to answer all the underlined questions; most are easy but some are tough. BTW, this page is \*not\* a “how-to” or substitute for listening to your instructor or for reading the Hooper Windsurfing Manual!

### A. Before everything else

1. Check wind speed and direction. Are you rated for the conditions?
2. For the current wind direction, what could be challenging for a windsurfer? Remember that on a south wind day the conditions near shore and in the mooring field can be notoriously unpredictable. (Why?)
3. How cold are the air and water? At Hoopers a wetsuit is mandatory if the water temperature is below \_\_\_\_ degrees. It's advisable if the air + water is below \_\_\_\_ degrees.
4. **Sign out at the Boathouse**, not only for your safety but also to record how much our equipment is being used. Don't forget to grab and wear a lifejacket — it happens too often.

### B. Equipment care and ...

1. Treat it like it's yours. Paddle away from piers, pins, and boats. And don't let any gear touch the concrete. Also, your sail should be the last thing out of the building and the first thing back in. (Why?)
2. Keep our windsurfing deck and surroundings clean and attractive. Pick up trash even if it isn't yours. (Have you heard of the “broken windows” theory?)

### C. Anticipate – on land

1. Make a game plan for your

session:

- Decide what skill(s) to focus on today. Tacks, balance, jibes, harness, freestyle ... ?
  - Map out your route: launching, navigating the mooring field, tacking upwind, returning to the pier. Making (and keeping) a reasonable plan is a mark of your progress as a windsurfer.
2. Go to the bathroom (on land please), hydrate, and use sun protection.
  3. Before you bring your sail in or out of the Lake Lab think which side of it you want to be on. (Why?)
  4. Before you launch:
    - Which end of the deck should you toss your sail in from? (Why?)
    - How high or low should you aim your sail toss? (Why?)
  5. Before carrying your board back into the Lake Lab decide which end should go in first. (Why?) And hang your boom on the correct (long or short) rack.

### D. Anticipate – on the water

1. Plan each uphaul before you do it. This is especially crucial if your sail is windward of your board.
  - Where does the board point now and where do you want it eventually to point?
  - Which side of the board do you want your sail to be on?
  - **Uphaul slowly**, especially the last bit when the clew leaves the water.
2. When falling in becomes inevitable:
  - Often it's best to hang on to the

boom until you or your sail hit the water. This decreases your chance of being injured by the boom or mast.

### 3. **Loosen up! Don't fight! Move! Experiment!**

- a) Posture--**back straight**. Hunching or bending over wastes energy and impairs balance. Plus, you're asking for lower back pain.
- b) Posture—flexed knees vs locked knees. *Experiment: Try hanging like a monkey. Then try straightening up with locked knee(s). What are the pros and cons?*
- c) In low wind, neutral position is your friend. (Why not in high wind?) So **don't rush out of neutral**.
- d) Look ahead and prepare for waves and puffs.
- e) *Experiment: Try working your sail fore, aft, out (“swing the door open”), in (“swing the door closed”). What happens in each of these 4 cases? (You'll keep adjusting your sail for the rest of your windsurfing life.)*
- f) Weirdness: “I'm on a beam reach but not moving!” You may be “stalled” because you're *over-sheeted*; try swinging the door \_\_\_\_\_.
- g) Don't glue your feet to your board. Move 'em and use 'em. Work back (in higher wind) and forth (in lower wind). *Experiment: Try spreading your feet far apart. Also try shifting them to one side or the other.*

h) *Experiment: Try shifting your hands on the boom, an inch or so forward or backward or together or apart. Does this make a difference?*

4. **Pre-visualize** your maneuvers. Decompose, say, a tack into a sequence of steps and imagine what you'll do and feel at each step. Execute the real maneuver only after you've imagined the whole sequence beforehand. This even works at home or on the bus or if you're bored at a party.
5. Why do I get blown downwind so fast? Answers: (1) you can't point as high on the wind clock as a sailboat can, and (2) whenever you're uphauling or not sailing you're automatically drifting further downwind. Antidote: Practicing everything above will help you stay upright longer.

### E. Finally

1. Don't be bashful about asking for rigging advice or for help carrying a board or sail. 99% of Hoopers and instructors are more than happy to help. For that matter be one of those 99% by offering your assistance to others. What goes around comes around.
2. In addition to the great instruction and resources at Hoopers you can find lots of instructional material on the Internet. The learning never ends...
3. Do you have any suggestions for this page? (Email [info@happystoic.com](mailto:info@happystoic.com))