



WindWise client Neil Richmond, planing out of a duck gybe

sb technique

MAKE YOUR MOVE!

HOW ANYONE CAN LEARN TO DUCK-GYBE!

Can't gybe? Don't worry, you stand a very decent chance of duck-gybing! **Simon Bornhoft** breaks down this seemingly elusive 'trick' to make it achievable – regardless of your level. Photos: **Karen Bornhoft / WindWise**

If you had two cloned intermediates and one focused just on gybing and the other just on duck-gybing, the odds are that the duck-gyber would learn their move the quickest and be most likely to plane out too. Despite limiting beliefs, my tests have proved that duck-gybing can actually be **easier** to learn than gybing. In fact, when someone comes on a course and dedicates decent time to light wind skills and drills and then makes 40-50 duck-gybe attempts in planing winds, the success rate is very high. I'm not talking about advanced sailors, either. If you can blast in the straps you can duck-gybe! Here's how...

SKILLS & DRILLS

SESSION 1: Sail 180s.

SESSION 2: Switch-stance.

SESSION 3: Non-planing duck-gybe – involving our 'upwind-downwinder', 'sail 180s' & 'switch-stance' skills and drills.

SESSION 4: MAKE YOUR MOVE – the fully planing duck-gybe!

KEY PRINCIPLES

Exaggerate and commit to our WindWise Principles, adding finer detail to speed up MAKING YOUR MOVE!

VISION: Look forward and through the turn to where you want to go.

TRIM: Adopt a wide foot spread to steer and lever the board.

OPPOSITION: Rig moves one way, you move in the opposite direction (and vice versa).

POWER: Wide arm spread, pulling down on the boom before and after 'ducking'.

STANCE: Going and out of the turn, adopt a super-7 'drop-&-push' stance with flexed back leg and extended front leg.

Build your skills, confidence and neuromuscular proprioception (muscle memory) by trying the following sessions on land first then using a large enough board to uphaul with a sub 6.0m rig on the water.

SESSION 1

'THE DUCK' – HALF A SAIL 360

When? First third of the move.

RIGHT SKILL, RIGHT TIME

Show the rig who's boss by accentuating these skills to handle the inevitable pull from the rig.

#1

On a broad reach, move the back hand well down the boom and pull in and down with both arms. Anticipate the mast pulling you downwind by keeping shoulders back and weighting the heels.

#2-3

Move the rig forward and release the front hand, immediately **replacing the rear hand**. Crucially allow the mast drop to leeward and throw the new rear hand behind you. Don't grab the boom just yet!

#4-6

Once balanced, yank the clew over your shoulder and swiftly get both hands onto the new side, crucially pull **down** on the boom. When duck-gybing you'd keep the rig still and turn the board. For now, rotate the rig to complete a sail 360. Rehearse, repeat and reap!



SESSION 2

'SWITCH-STANCE'

WHEN? Sailing out of the turn, you're briefly 'switch-stance', like an Egyptian monolith. Rehearsing this develops muscle memory for glorified endings.

RIGHT SKILL, RIGHT TIME

Practice on land to crack 'switch-stance' on the water...

#1

Sailing across the wind, position the mast upright and sheet out slightly, pulling down on the boom.

#2

Quickly switch the feet by bringing the back foot forward and immediately stepping right back with the new back foot.

#3

Once 'switched', look forward, mast upright and sail slightly sheeted out, turning your belly button towards the wind.



SESSION 3

THE NON-PLANING DUCK-GYBE

Let's look at the non-planing duck-gybe and how the skills and drills link into MAKING YOUR MOVE.

#1-3 – HALF A SAIL 360

Sail on a broad reach then duck the rig using your rehearsed sail 360s. Remember, shoulders back, replace the rear hand, let the rig swing and don't rush to grab the boom on the new side too soon.

#4 – LOOK, LEAN & LEVER

Once both hands are spread wide on the new side of the boom, pull down hard and **don't move the feet!** Hips and shoulders stay back to oppose the forward rig. Then follow our gybing and duck-gybing mantra...

LOOK where you want to go.
(Turning left? Look left!)

LEAN where you're looking to weight the inside rail and turn the board.

LEVER the rig the opposite way (right in picture) to counterbalance and enhance the turn.

COUNTERINTUITIVE MOMENT

Coming out of the turn it's imperative to sheet **out** to allow the board to turn under the sail! Sheeting **in** stalls or backwinds you.

#5-6 – SWITCH-STANCE

In the last third of the turn you're momentarily 'switch-stance'. Pull down on the boom to change feet to sail away normally.



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6

Q&A

Q: Why does the rig get pulled out of my hands?

A: Pull down harder on the boom, shoulders back more, and sheet in after unhooking and gradually bearing away.

Q: Why does the 'new side' of the boom seem so far away?

A: You've left the duck too late, not waited for the mast to drop into the turn, slowed down, or (very commonly) turned too tightly before 'ducking'.

Q: I get both hands on the boom but lose power or the rig gets ripped out of my hands.

A: When exiting the apparent wind is behind you so – counterintuitively – *sheet out!*



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If you have any questions regarding your technique, or any subjects you'd like covered in the magazine, you can contact sb@windwise.net

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MAKE YOUR MOVE

SESSION 4 THE PLANING DUCK-CYBE

Once duck-gybing in non-planing conditions, there's one final skill needed for strong wind glory – making the sail 'go light' enough to confidently duck your rig. Find flat water, a sub 6.5m sail and be bold!

#1-2

Sail fast on a broad reach, keeping low and well outboard when you unhook (See the 'Hook Out Hold On' exercise in the November 2010 issue). Take the back foot out of the strap, **but** bear away a few degrees at a time. It's sheeting in while gradually bearing away that makes the rig 'go lighter', enabling you to duck the rig **before** you turn past the first third of the turn!

#3-4

Strong rearward shoulders to release the front hand and take that professional ... pause ... allowing the mast to drop before collecting the rig.

#5-7

Yank the clew to windward (right in pic), get both hands right up the boom, sheet out – then **look, lean** (to the left in these pictures) and **lever** the rig (to the right) to MAKE THAT MOVE yours!

SIMON SAYS...

Remember, it's blast straight and broad, then 'duck'. Around 70% of the turning is done after the duck! It's not a gybe with a 'duck' in the middle. I urge you to try these skills, and let me know how it goes. **D**

