





{Feasible Freestyle for everyone! }

# FLUID PROGRESSIONS: FREESTYLE FOR EVERYONE

## PART 6: BODY & RIG 360S

JIM COLLIS continues this month with the sixth instalment of his Freestyle for Everyone series, a string of articles designed to help consolidate our general windsurfing skills, whatever our ability level, through building and developing our rig and board confidence whilst having fun out on the water. Having already looked at 7 of the 10 freestyle skills in the last five issues, namely lifting/dragging a foot, kneeling/sitting/lying down while sailing, switch stance sailing, pirouettes, rig 180s & 360s, clew-first sailing, and sailing backwards, Jim is moving on this month to the 8th of his feasible freestyle moves - body & rig 360s.

### A few words to recap...

#### “Freestyle for everyone”

This concept is not about learning the latest ‘hoochy-ka-poochy’ manoeuvre, where we are upside down and inside out whilst travelling backwards at speed, it is about getting on the water, whatever the conditions and whatever our ability level, and getting better at handling a rig and moving around on a board in a fun and entertaining way: what freestyle is really all about! The end result is that, as well as having a good laugh every time we go on the water, we will be learning and consolidating core skills so that we are getting better at our general sailing without even realising it, and gaining key foundations in freestyle so that if we wanted to take it further, we would be set up to do so.

#### 10 simple skills

Rather than heading out on the water and randomly trying ‘twirly things’ on a board, we are going to work our way through a simple progression of 10 easy to achieve freestyle skills that get progressively harder and can be done in non-planing or planing conditions. These 10 skills, running from lifting/dragging a foot as the 1st, through to a helicopter tack as the 10th, underpin the essential movements in windsurfing that help us as sailors to get better at all skills. We will find that certain skills work as great exercises for certain moves that we are trying in our general sailing, and that as we get more confident with the 10 skills we can start to link them together to create new skills and gain new and far-improved confidence without even realising it!

#### Kit and conditions

We should help ourselves from the start by jumping on a bigger board than perhaps we would usually go on and a smallish rig, rather than some monster. Ideal would be a board of around 130-200 litres (depending on our weight) and a sail between 4.5m-6.5m (depending on what we feel comfortable with). We should also start by going out in light to marginal winds (Force 1-3) rather than throwing ourselves into it during a typhoon and wondering why nothing seems to be working! As we become more confident at throwing a smallish rig and ourselves around in marginal conditions and on a more stable platform, so we might then up the ante to improve our skill level by going down in board size, going out in slightly stronger winds and maybe increasing the rig size a fraction (although we should always keep the rig at a manageable size for the sake of manoeuvrability).

For those really light wind days, or perhaps when getting onto the water is just not feasible for that day, then there is always the option of taking your fin off and doing some of the skills on land on a finless board and rig. Remember... all time spent on your kit is time well spent!

#### Keeping it stupidly simple!

As always with learning any skill, simplicity is the key. As such, each of the 10 skills will be broken down with Jim’s K.I.S.S. (“Keeping It Stupidly Simple”) coaching methodology; 5 basic terms that help to simplify and strip skills down to their core working components.

The 5 terms of K.I.S.S. are:

**HEAD** - Looking where we want to go and being aware of everything around us

**ARMS**- Keeping a straight front arm, thereby distancing ourselves from the rig and causing us to naturally counter balance against it, and using our back arm to sheet in or draw power from the rig

**LEGS**- Adjusting leg and foot positions on the board to keep it flat and us stable!

**BODY**- Changing our body’s position/shape according to conditions and how we feel. I.e. if we feel over-powered or threatened we get lower and if we feel underpowered or inefficient we become more upright

**BREATHE**- Remembering to breathe so that we can be relaxed, alert and responsive when sailing, which in turn helps us to flow and perform more naturally whatever the skill or conditions.

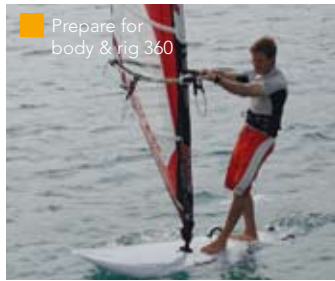
#### Freestyle skill 8

##### Skill 8: Body & Rig 360s

The body & rig 360, although it sounds complicated, is very simply walking around 360 degrees on the board whilst keeping hold of the rig! As well as being brilliant fun and very achievable, it also helps massively with the rest of our sailing:

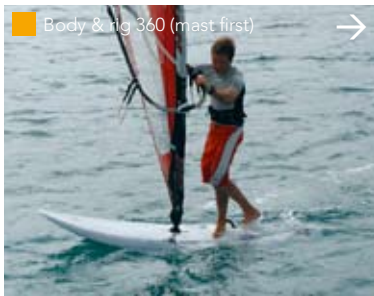
- It helps develop nimble and confident footwork around the board, which pays huge dividends for tacks, gybes, footstrap work and effective planing technique
- It develops our confidence and understanding about the handling of a rig, and helps introduce what it feels like to be temporarily back-winded, with the wind on the wrong side of the sail (which will come in very useful for when we look at back-winded sailing next issue)
- It creates good foundations and building blocks for more advanced skills, such as monkey and reverse monkey gybes

There are 2 versions of the body & rig 360, according to the direction we rotate on the board: mast-first (where the mast leads the 360) or clew-first (where the clew leads). The mast-first version is the easiest to learn, and so let's look at this first.



Get comfortable sailing across the wind (on a beam reach), and prepare for doing the skill:

- Turn your front foot so that the toes are pointing into the wind
- Spread your hands slightly on the boom

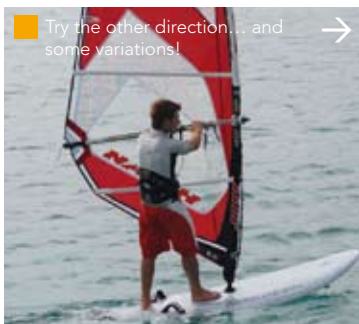


Leading with your head and keeping your arms extended/rig away, step up with your back foot to wrap it around the front of the mast foot. Continue to walk around the mast foot until you are back in the normal sailing position, trying to stay over the centre-line of the board at all times to maintain a flat and stable platform.



As you come back to your original sailing position, keep a low body position for stability, look straight ahead with your head (NOT at the rig!) and allow your back hand to slide back up the boom towards your front hand.

N.B. If you keep a wide grip on the boom as you finish your 360 you will over-sheet the sail and get pulled over. To combat this, either allow your back hand to slide up the boom towards your front hand, or even let go of the boom with your back hand altogether.



Try again, and see if you can do more than one in a row (without getting too dizzy...) As always, try doing some when sailing in the other direction, and for the more adventurous, try doing a jump half way around.

When you feel confident, why not try one during the middle of a gybe (start the body & rig 360 when you are facing directly downwind)...this is what is known as a reverse monkey gybe!

# JIM COLLIS

## TECHNIQUE

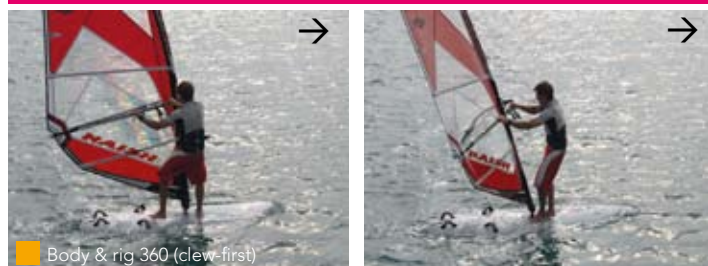
Having mastered this version of the body & rig 360, let's move onto the alternative version, where we rotate the other way with the rig (clew-first as opposed to mast-first):



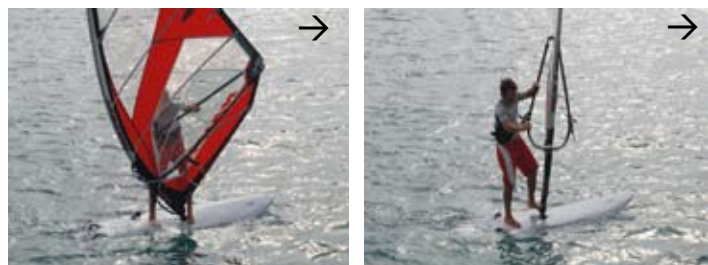
Get comfortable sailing across the wind (on a beam reach), and prepare to do the skill:

- Wrap your front foot around the front of the mast foot
- Spread your hands slightly on the boom

Leading with your head and keeping your arms extended/rig away, step your back foot up in front of the mast-foot so that it is 'heel to toe' with your front foot, and then continue to walk around the mast-foot until you are back in the normal sailing position, trying to stay over the centre-line of the board at all times to maintain a flat and stable platform.



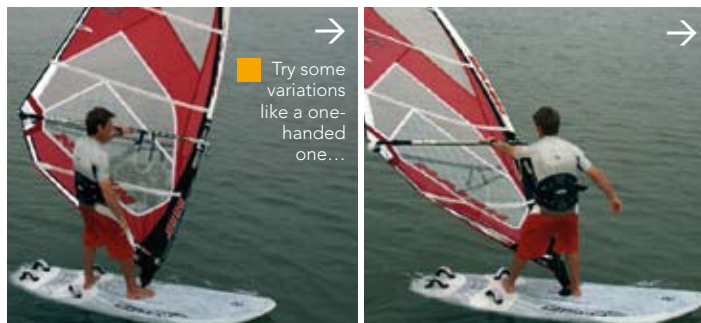
Body & rig 360 (clew-first)



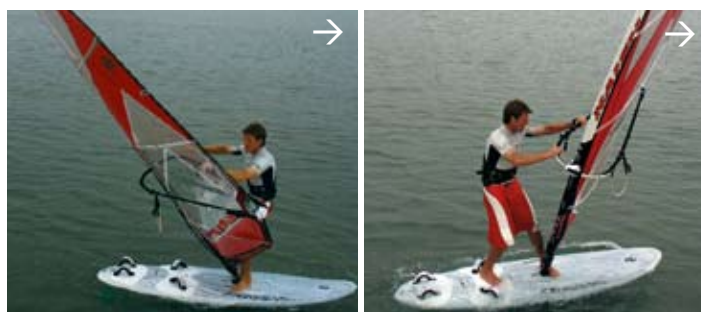
Finish 360 in a stable position

As you come round to your original sailing position, keep a low body position for stability, look straight ahead with your head (and NOT at the rig!), and allow your hands to slide closer together again on the boom to prevent you from over-sheeting.

Try again, and try doing some one-handed (with your front hand off the boom) how many can you do in a row? As always, try doing some when sailing in the other direction, and maybe try alternating between this clew-first version and the other mast-first one. When you feel confident, why not try one during the middle of a gybe (always start the body & rig 360 when you are facing directly downwind)? This is what is known as a monkey gybe!



Try some variations like a one-handed one...



### Top Tips for Body & Rig 360s:

- Always prepare with your hands and front foot before starting the skill
- Lead the rotation with your head
- Keep your arms extended/rig away for good balance
- Move your feet around the mast-foot and stay over the centre-line of the board to keep the board flat
- Keep your body low at the end for stability

Hopefully this episode has given us some ideas to try on the water whatever our motivations and ability level, and at the same time reminded us that it is all about having a laugh out there, while improving our skill level without even realising!

Next month we will be moving onto the penultimate freestyle skill in this Fluid Progressions: Freestyle for Everyone series – skill 9: sailing backwinded. In the meantime...get out there and enjoy!

"Freestyle for Everyone" is written by Jim Collis - Pro Coach, Instructor Trainer and Technique Editor for Windsurf magazine. If you'd like any more information on coaching or training to be an instructor with Jim please contact him on [jimcollis@windsurfevolution.co.uk](mailto:jimcollis@windsurfevolution.co.uk) or visit [www.windsurfevolution.co.uk](http://www.windsurfevolution.co.uk)