



# How's about this book

**Windsurfing** is about wind, water, and people.

*The Windsurfing Bible* is certainly about wind and water, but it's really more about people—actually two people: you and me. This is an *us* oriented book. We're going to get our feet—among other things—wet together.

We're also going to get to know each other. In reading, you'll find that it's easy to know me. But how can I, the writer, get to know you, the reader? Simple—because I already do. Here's how.

Have you ever watched someone struggle? I mean really struggle with something that you've already learned: hitting a baseball, hitting a golf ball, hitting a tennis ball . . . skiing, skating, dancing . . . or windsurfing. And, in watching, have you reacted with giggles and guffaws, or empathy and understanding? I'll bet it was the latter, because windsurfers, by nature, don't laugh at other windsurfers (or skiers or skaters or dancers). Having been there before, they understand what the other person endures.

It's your nature—the good nature of windsurfers and windsurfers-to-be—that I know. How well do I know it? *You* try opening your home to five or ten strangers each week, for a whole week, *for an entire decade*, without understanding them. If that's not enlightening, try having deep conversations in deep water with thousands of new friends, then tending all their bruises, blisters, and egos. Believe me, you'll quickly know the nature of people who windsurf.

Besides your nature, there are other things I know about you. I know how you feel. That is, how you feel the first time you experience the eye-widening sensation of sailing faster than ever before, while hooked-in to your harness; how your lower back feels after a day of more uphauling than sailing; how it feels to arrive at the water, see whitecaps, and have your adrenaline—or apprehension—pump up your heart rate.

Book 1 of The Windsurfing Bible  
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Then there are your frustrations. I know a lot about them, too. The frustrations of not enough wind, or too much wind; not enough sail, or too much sail; trying a new technique, falling every time, and not knowing why. How about the exasperation of learning to adjust and readjust the harness-lines, or learning to control the sail during a beachstart? Have you experienced my personal peeve: after a fall, realizing that the reason why the sun is suddenly so bright is that your \$90 sunglasses are slowly sinking to the bottom? Finally, there's the hair-tearing frustration of driving hours to a sailing site, encountering perfect conditions, then discovering that you forgot to bring your mast.

So I know your nature, feelings, and frustrations. But there's one thing about you I don't know: your windsurfing ability. Or maybe you have no ability because you haven't tried it yet. Whatever your ability is, or isn't, you probably belong somewhere on the following list. Where you fall (no pun intended), depends on whether you . . .

*Level 1* ~ Haven't tried it yet, or you have but didn't do very well.

*Level 2* ~ Can sail generally where you're aiming and complete a walk-around turn.

*Level 3* ~ Can sail exactly where you're aiming and complete light-wind tacks and finish some gybes.

*Level 4* ~ Can beachstart, sail in a harness, and finish some moderate-wind tacks and gybes.

*Level 5* ~ Can sail with the centerboard retracted and complete moderate-wind tacks and gybes.

*Level 6* ~ Can waterstart, use the front footstrap, and finish some high-wind gybes.

*Level 7* ~ Can complete most carved gybes and are trying other high-wind techniques.

There are two additional levels: the *expert windsurfer* and the *contented windsurfer*. Expert windsurfers complete every gybe and always sail with a smile. Contented windsurfers don't complete every gybe but always sail with a grin. They are perfectly happy, if not thrilled, with their present skills, and know they can reach the next level, whenever the mood moves them.

This book will help you become an expert or contented wind-surfer. And it isn't that hard. All you need is some reading time, some water time, and a lot of patience, practice, and persistence.

## How this book is organized

*The Windsurfer's Bible* is divided into three parts; each deals with a specific wind strength—light, moderate, and strong— and the necessary skills to sail in that wind. The three categories of wind speed correspond roughly to a range, given in miles-per-hour. *Light-wind* whispers from 1 to 11 mph; *moderate-wind* blows from 12 to 17 mph; and *high-wind* howls from 18 mph on up. For advocates of the Beaufort Scale, light-wind corresponds to force 1 through 3 (1–18 kph), moderate-wind to force 4 (19–27 kph), and high-wind to force 5 and above (27+ kph).

It will be more meaningful, however, to think of these categories in terms of your own body-weight and sailing ability. This is because a lightweight freshman would consider 12 mph to be high-wind, and a heavyweight senior would consider 12 mph to be light-wind.

So, think of wind strength in terms of yourself. The categories have the following attributes:

Light-wind ~ You sail with the centerboard down, and you hold up the rig rather than the rig holding you up.

Moderate-wind ~ You sail in a harness with the centerboard retracted, and the rig holds you up rather than you holding the rig up.

High-wind ~ You sail in both footstraps with the centerboard retracted, and the rig angles all the way back and down.

If you're new to windsurfing, these references to retracted centerboards, harnesses, footstraps, and angled rigs are probably bewildering. At this early stage in your windsurfing experience, wind strength might be easier to understand in the following way:

Light-wind ~ The water looks calm. You can hold the rig and actually sail.

Moderate-wind ~ The first whitecaps appear. The rig feels overpowering and pulls you over.

High-wind ~ A lot of whitecaps appear. The rig is ripped out of your hands.

The sequence of books, and the techniques taught in each, follows the order in which they should be learned; there's a natural progression. So, you learn to set-sail



Light Wind



Moderate Wind



High Wind

before you beachstart; you beachstart before you waterstart; and you waterstart before you duck gybe.

There is one exception. If you have never windsurfed and live where the sun always shines, the wind always blows, and no one owns a long-board, don't sit on shore and wait for the wind to drop. Get up and go! First work on the beachstart, then sail your way through Part II. However, if you go this route, exercise caution. Ask your friends which one of them will rescue you when, not if, you need it. Also, always ask this question *before* you start sailing.

For those not living in paradise—this morning my coffee mug had whitecaps—it makes sense to follow the natural progression. You'll have a solid base and be a better windsurfer for it.

There's a natural progression within each book, too. The 6 steps of each technique comprise the first part of each book and are followed by an explanation of the most common mistakes made in each step. Mistake sections also have a "blunder blurb" that summarizes the potential pitfalls. Next come refinements; here the six steps condense into two. For example, steps 1, 2, and 3 of the fast tack flow together into one step, and steps 4, 5, and 6 flow together into another.

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## How to use this book

When you opened this book, you did so with some windsurfing baggage. This consists of your current sailing ability, your bad habits, and your expectations.

First, your sailing ability. You undoubtedly fall somewhere in one of the seven levels mentioned at the beginning of this book. Human nature being what it is, some readers will have read the excerpt (sample), and maybe even bought the book, that describes the technique that they must learn. Sound familiar?

Knowing that you'll skip around, the following guide shows how best to do it. The levels of windsurfing ability appear along the top of the chart, the books are along the left side, and the numbers indicate the sequence in which the books should be read.

Ability >	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Books							
1. How's about this book	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2. Necessary Knowledge	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Part 1 Basic Skills &amp; Light-Wind Sailing</b>							
3. In the beginning	4	4	4	browse	skip	skip	skip
4. Stance & Steering	5	5	5	browse	skip	skip	skip
<b>Part 2 Intermediate Skills &amp; Moderate-Wind Sailing</b>							
5. Stance & Harness	6	6	6	4	4	browse	browse
6. Beachstart	7	7	7	5	5	browse	browse
7. Fast Tack	8	8	8	6	6	4	browse
8. Flare Gybe	9	9	9	7	7	5	browse
<b>Part 3 Advanced Skills &amp; High-Wind Sailing</b>							
9. Footstraps	10	10	10	8	8	6	4
10. Waterstart	11	11	11	9	9	7	browse
11. Carved Gybes	12	12	12	10	10	8	5
12. Ski & Laydown Gybe	13	13	13	11	11	9	6
13. Duck Gybe	14	14	14	12	12	10	7
<b>Free Books of Useful Information</b>							
14. Rigging	15	15	15	13	13	11	8
15. Equipment	16	16	16	14	14	12	9
16. Stampeding Fish	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Now, your bad habits. What are bad habits anyway? For that matter, what are good habits? Think of any habit as a *learned physical reaction* to a situation that has been, or seems to have been, successful in the past. The key phrase for bad habits in windsurfing is *seems to have been*. Here's a common example: when first sailing in strong wind, you might find the sail overpowering

and you probably react by sheeting-out (which is pushing your back arm out and pulling your front arm in, and is described in detail in the next book).

Sheeting-out initially seems successful because it lessens the pull of the sail. But, if you continue to sail sheeted-out, you create a habit that leads to a high-wind struggle, innumerable bungled gybes, and having your knees rip through the sail window when you sheet-out while hooked-in to your harness.

If you have learned a bad habit like sheeting-out, you can certainly unlearn it, too. Do this by replacing the incorrect reaction with the correct one, then repeating it enough times to develop a good habit. (The old adage that “practice makes perfect,” gets more people, in more sports, in more trouble, if all they practice is bad technique. Practice the good kind.)

In each book under Mistakes, you’ll find every bad habit imaginable. Determine which ones you’ve been practicing and what to replace them with. Also, take this book to the beach and, during breaks, glance at the illustrations. This isn’t a coffee table book to be kept at home. It’s meant to resemble you: wet, worn, and wind-blown.

Now your expectations. Everyone has them, especially you “haven’t tried it yet” windsurfers. You expect windsurfing to be either *hard*, because you have seen people try to teach themselves to do it, or *easy*, because you have seen people who know how to do it, do it.

Understand right now that windsurfing is a difficult sport to master. One reason is the large number of variables. Windsurfing isn’t like snow skiing where there are signs indicating the degree of difficulty of each slope. The conditions on your local windsurfing slope may change from day to day, if not minute to minute. The wind may change direction, increase, decrease, or die. The water may have chop, swells, waves, or be totally flat. All these conditions require different techniques and different equipment.

The number of variables is further increased by the need to properly adjust the parts of your rig and board: sail tension, harness-lines, centerboard, mast-base, and so on. If these aren’t just right, you’ll have as much fun windsurfing as you would snow skiing on water skis.

Another reason why windsurfing is so challenging is the complexity of the techniques. Each maneuver has six steps, but there may be three, four, or more different things to do within each step. For example, your position during step 3 of the carved gybe is: front heel raised, toes of back foot pressed down, knees bent, hips above back foot, shoulders above back knee, front arm straight, back arm bent, and eyes looking through the sail window. See what I mean? And that's just *one* of the six steps! Don't expect to perform anything perfectly the first time, or the first day, or the first. . . . Give yourself time, have some patience.

In fact, have a lot of patience! The more patience you have with your progress, the more enjoyable your learning will be. And, for what it's worth, if you follow the sequence and instruction in this book, you'll certainly learn faster than I did. A technique that took me five years to learn—I have a lot of patience—may take you five minutes, or five hours, or five. . . . Having said that, don't set a time limit to master a skill. To master any technique will take . . . as long as it takes. Profound, no; realistic, yes.

What all this means is the best way to deal with your expectations is to banish them from your brain.

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## How to learn with this book

People tell me that two of the most effective things I do as a teacher are to talk slowly—the fact that I stutter helps—and to repeat everything I teach day after day. During a five-day clinic, I broadcast the phrase, “Keep your front arm straight,” about two hundred times. Invariably, on the *last* day someone will say, “What you said *today* about keeping my front arm straight, really did wonders for my tacks and gybes. You should have said that sooner!”

What does that tell you about how to learn with this book? You can't absorb everything in one sitting, let alone one reading. Read and reread the pertinent sections as often as necessary to assimilate the entire technique.

While we're on the subject of assimilation, let me introduce the *Windsurfing Learning Process*, which is a five-step procedure to use when learning a technique.

The key words are: *Picture, Visualize, Practice, Try, Analyze.*

*Picture* each of the six steps of the technique. It's difficult to learn any maneuver, unless you have a mental image of every step.

*Visualize* yourself on the water, slowly, smoothly, and successfully performing the six steps. In other words, string together the six mental photographs you took in the preceding procedure.

*Practice* as many repetitions of the maneuver on land as necessary to perform it without thinking. This "groundwork" grooves the technique into your muscles and mind (muscle memory). Think back to high school; how many hours of practice did athletic teams spend for each hour of game time?

*Try* the technique as many times on the water as you can during each sailing session. Now think of how many turns you make during an hour of skiing, skating, Rollerblading, or whatever; then compare those numbers to number of turns you ordinarily make during an hour of windsurfing. Big difference, isn't there?

*Analyze* what went wrong every time you fall. Did I sheet-out? Was my front arm bent? If you neglect to analyze mishaps, you will create, repeat, and reinforce bad habits.

Having touched briefly on the methodology of learning, it's helpful to delve into the physiology of it, too—in *very* layman-like terms. When you learn something academic, you're sitting reading a book or listening to someone speak. Your central nervous system recognizes that your brain is in gear and starts pumping more blood to your head to handle the increased activity. When you learn something athletic, you're standing and moving. Your brain shifts into gear, but so do many other muscles, which creates a problem for your central nervous system: where to pump the blood—the brain, the muscles, or both.

When you're learning to windsurf, every muscle, including your brain muscle, is in gear. Your central nervous system registers all this physical activity and starts directing blood out to all your muscles. This

means your brain gets less, which is trouble when you have to think about where to move your hands or place your feet.

So, when you're working on a new skill and find you're suddenly doing worse than before, it's probably time for a break. Sit on shore, eat a sandwich, take a nap, and relax to let some blood flow upward instead of mainly outward. You'll learn more quickly, safely, and enjoyably!

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## How to teach with this book

Let me give you a short course in how to teach a friend or relative how to windsurf.

Don't!

That is, unless the friend is one you'd rather not have anymore. Bad marriage? No problem! Teach your spouse on *your* favorite sail with the boom height set for you. After the lesson, you should both immediately initiate divorce proceedings.

Here's how the usual "friend or relative lesson" goes. The instructor takes the instructee into the water. The instructor gets on the board, uphauls, sails out, tacks, sails back, jumps off, and says, "See how easy it is? Now you try it." The instructor then holds the back of the board and says, "Now, just pull up that sail thing and go." Does this sound familiar? Have you seen this? Have you done this?

One thing the instructor forgot to teach the instructee was how to turn around. Teaching someone how to set-sail without first showing them how to turn around, is like teaching someone how to dive without first showing them how to swim. The results are the same—a rescue. The best way to show friends or relatives how to windsurf, is to show them to the nearest windsurfing shop!

Having said all that, what should you do if there isn't a shop, with a good school, in your area? Then, as a last resort, teach your friends yourself. But first, read Part I of this book, follow the sequence, and *please* teach them everything. Demonstrate and have them try the techniques on shore before leading them into the water. Use a small sail, too. If you don't, you'll probably have to find a new friend or a good lawyer.

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## How This book evolved

People find it amusing that the current indoor world-record-holder for misspelled words and lousy grammar, has written some books. Upon reflection though, my friends admit that *The Windsurfing Bible* was probably inevitable and, like many things in life, took time to evolve.

Like twenty-two years.

It began during the summer of 1980. I experienced a windsurfing lesson one morning, bought a board that afternoon, quit my job on Wall Street, then moved to Maine to open a sailboard shop. This was not a mid-life crisis. I was just hooked—line and sinker, too—on windsurfing.

We're talking seriously hooked here, friends. Picture this: there were boards on the bed, sails in the shower, and booties in the bidet. (What else could it possibly be used for?) The sailboard trailers were kept inside the garage; the cars were kept outside the garage. I had my priorities straight. Did it affect my personal relationships?

"I think it's time we get married," announced my partner. (She had priorities, too.)

"Great," I said, "but only if it's on windsurfers and *only* if the wind is blowing." I was not having a light-wind wedding—and we didn't!

We soon realized that the water temperature and winters in Maine were not conducive to year-round sailing. Our fingers, toes, and my nose were advising caution and relocation—fast. This resulted in a three-month "business" trip to Florida to find a site for our shop, The Sailboard Center. We chose the Wabasso-Sebastian area (on the east coast near Vero Beach). The wind, warmth, and waist-deep water enticed us.

When this news began to percolate among our friends around New England, excitement brewed. "I'll be down for a week in February," said one. "I'll be down for two weeks in March," said another. Whoa! Wait a minute. Maybe there's a business opportunity here.

So, in 1983, The Sailboard Center became The Sailboard Inn.

The book began to seriously emerge when our guests began to ask for windsurfing tips. “How do I do this?” “Why can't I do that?” Suddenly, I was a windsurfing teacher, coach, and, sometimes, counselor. Suddenly, I was also having as much fun *teaching* windsurfing as I was, well, windsurfing.

So, in 1984, The Sailboard Inn became The Sailboard School.

A teaching method and structure evolved. I discovered that the quickest way for students to master a complex maneuver was to break it down into parts, and the first technique I dissected was the fast tack, which was taught in six steps. Bingo! This method worked so well with the tack that I broke down all windsurfing maneuvers into six steps. The results were startling.

But, something was missing.

During classes, people were scribbling notes on scraps of paper, their forearms, and sail windows. What they needed was a training manual, so I fired-up the computer and promptly produced one. It was about twelve pages long and covered the six steps in each technique. When people praised it, the thought struck me that if this puny, little booklet was so helpful, how much more helpful it would be if the booklet became a book.

It did—you're reading it.

One final word before we start. If you have attended my Florida or Bonaire school, you have contributed to, and are a part of, *The Windsurfing Bible*. You have asked every question imaginable (and some unimaginable). Between the covers of this book, I have again tried to answer all your questions. Also, watching you learn the maneuvers showed me everything that can possibly go wrong, and you'll find these contributions in each book under the heading *Mistakes*. Finally, if you are someone whom I have taught, please know that you have also taught me—and for that I am truly grateful.

It is my sincerest wish that you find what follows to be informative, valuable, and fun. May your enjoyment of windsurfing be as great as mine!

Burr Hazen

Vero Beach, Florida & Lac Bay, Bonaire