

How to tack the 700

The following posts were made recently on the yahoo group and include a lot of really useful tips which should be very helpful if you are having trouble tacking.

Ian Nolan July 2007

Question, Ian P

"Recently I started sailing an RS700 and would welcome any advice on tacking while beating. The boat seems hell bent on luffing head to wind during tacking, and getting it moving again is also not very easy. When tacking of the wire it seems I have to go through the wind by some considerable degree before moving off on the new tack. If I don't go through the wind enough before moving off, the wind hits the sail and the bow starts turning quickly in to the wind and the boat is put in irons. Perhaps I have raked the mast too much? I have tried letting of kicker before tack which may be making it slightly easier."

2 Ian N

"I personally think that tacking is the most difficult aspect of handling the boat and is something I often struggle with. However things have been improving recently (although still a long way from perfect) and these are some of the things I've tried to focus on.

Try raking the board by using the front elastic earlier than normal. I was talking to one of the top guys at the nationals and was surprised to learn how early he raked his board.

Drop off more mainsheet through the tack than you have been. If you watch people tacking, some simply uncleat the main as they come in off the wire and let the sail out as they go into the boat. Others are still positively feeding the sail out as they cross the boat onto the new side.

Move quickly across the boat keeping the boat flat, the longer this takes more speed you lose and the less control you have coming out.

Turn quickly and smoothly until just below a close hauled course, trying to keep some speed and therefore rudder control.

If the boat is pointing in the right direction and is still moving forward, hook on first and then sheet in and go out in one quick movement. The boat should accelerate away nicely.

If you are late across and the boat is stopping, a good bounce on the windward rack can get things moving in the right direction. If this doesn't work it's time to bail out, reset and start again.

The vast majority of people have the rake set at around 7.34m from the masthead to the top of the rudder mount.

There are a couple of videos available through the Association website of Paul Bayliss and Andy White tacking. Well worth a look. You should also try and take advantage of one of the coaching sessions which the class runs".

3 Ian P

"I was out today and I have to say things were getting better, but still far from satisfactory. I am one who uncleats the main coming of the wire and when crossing - feeding more main sheet out before squaring a heading and sitting back on the wire. But I'm having to point on a reach before moving off, otherwise I can't guarantee myself that I will move off! Tacking the boat takes a long time to complete and loses many boat lengths! What has astonished me about the RS700 is how much it brakes due to rudder movement, and I have now learnt to use the sail more to aid steering. I will check the mast rake. I presume the more raked it is the faster the boats upwind speed but as a consequence of greater mast rake it is harder to tack."

4 Paul B

"I can only echo what Ian N has so eloquently described. The boat has a large mainsail and a small rudder, so it's easy for the rudder to stall out. I'd add the following

- Make sure your rudder and fittings are in good shape. Pay attention to the fairness of the rudder blade. The better this is, the less likely it is to stall.
- use plenty of cunningham, particularly on an older sail to keep the drive in the sail forward.
- bolt ropes shrink - fact. It's a £20 job for a sailmaker to let it off and extend it. This will allow you to pull the cunningham on more easily and with better effect. As an example, I have a 5 year old sail that I normally sail with, and a new sail for events. I have to use around 25% of the tension in the new sail to achieve the same effect as the old one, and I've already had the bolt rope let off once!!!
- agree with raking the board early... you don't have to go the whole way, you can rake a little as soon as you're on the wire, and progressively to fully raked in about 12-15 knots.
- If you feel the boat going into a luff coming out of the tack, engage some windward heel by using your weight / position and letting mainsheet off. Your bum will be on the wing bar at this stage, so you'll be in the water, but don't worry about that. Be hooked on if you can, and as the boat bears away, you'll "water start" and you can then step out as the boat takes off."

5 Mark P

"Are you unhooking yourself whilst still holding onto the trapeze handel and then running across while the boat is still flat? If you are light like me you have no option!"

6 Matt H

On the entry to the tack try not to let the main out too early as it helps to steer the boat into the tack by blowing the stern round, less rudder = more speed and hence not getting stuck in irons.

As you cross the boat let out a good armful of mainsheet.

Heel the boat to windward on top of you when you come out of the tack (go straight onto the wing). This helps it bear away out of the tack and stops it going back head to wind. By doing this with boat heel you do not have to use so much rudder and hence the boat does not slow down as much.

Try to hook on whilst the boat is still slightly windward heeled and then kick out onto the wing pulling the main in as you go, keeping a small amount of windward heel on. You should then accelerate nicely. (Works at 76kg hole 6)