

self-service

HOW TO...



PART 3

MAKE A NOSE PROTECTOR THAT REALLY WORKS

Time to get those tools out of the shed again as our resident DIY demon, Marjan Tkavc, shows us how to keep our noses clean...

If I look back on my 'windsurfing career', I'd say that one of the best things about this sport is the learning curve. While it's packed with many memorable moments, for me, the part from waterstarts to getting into the straps and planing was really exhilarating. Those first blasts over the water surface; that first fix of pure speed... Unforgettable.

At the beginning these blasts were but brief moments of ecstasy preceding wild wipe-outs and crazy catapults. There was nothing to worry about though, because I was on a plastic HiFly board which could take the abuse. While the HiFly was great, it wasn't long before I splashed out and bought my first real freeride board. Proudly showing it to a friend, I was surprised when he tut-tutted and told me that I should have kept the

HiFly for a while if I didn't want to destroy my expensive new board before I learnt to plane. I didn't take him seriously at the time, but he was right – and very much so.

I tried to protect the nose of my new treasure, but there was nothing available at the time. So I copied a promising solution that I'd seen used by some other early intermediates, and simply taped a piece of EVA sleeping pad over the nose. It looked fine at first, but in practice it didn't really work. The mast impacts just went through the soft padding and damaged the surface of the board underneath. Only that was even worse, because the damage was hidden.

Then I came up with a protector that solved both issues. I took a thin plate of aluminium and fixed it on top of the EVA padding. In this way the impact dissipates on the hard surface and the

energy is absorbed by the padding beneath.

Another tip is not to fix this protector permanently. I just used four pieces of tape to fix it over the nose, so it can be easily removed to regularly check for possible damage. And last but not least, it can be mounted as and when required – like when the kids want to use dad's pride and joy.

I used this nose protector of mine for a couple of seasons, until I miraculously stopped wiping-out, and it worked really well. Initially I made it a little bit too small, so some of the impacts on the very edge of the board caused damage, so here I've increased the size so that it extends over the edge. But even this big it feels feather-light in the hands. OK, kids – my board's ready for your abuse now!

Note: There are nose protectors available today and some boards already come with one fitted. But beware of the ones that don't have that crucial combination of hard shell and soft padding. Check out 'The Board Lady' on this subject as well at boardlady.com/noseprotection.htm



- 1 **Tools required:** Thin aluminium plate (1mm thickness, 45 x 55cm for the board shown), a bigger sheet of paper, EVA sleeping pad, quality duck tape in the colour of your choice, metal file, paper scissors, metal cutting scissors, permanent marker and some cleaning benzene.
- 2 Use paper to make a template of the nose shape. Make sure to fold the paper all the way around the edges, where you want your nose protector to be.
- 3 Transfer the shape to the aluminium plate using a permanent marker.
- 4 Cut the aluminium plate with metal cutting scissors. Don't be put off if you've never done this sort of thing before – it's fairly easy and with a bit of practice you'll make the round shape in no time.
- 5 Smooth the sharp edges of the aluminium with a metal file, and then give the plate some real three-dimensional shape. Use your hands to shape it as close to the curves of the nose as possible. Again it's fairly easy and straightforward – put the aluminium plate over the nose and

push with both hands in the top/middle to create the concave dent to cover the nose (pointing-up) shape, which is clearly seen in the picture. Then continue by twisting the sides of the plate to get the shape of the nose edges.

- 6 Trace the aluminium plate shape on the EVA padding with the permanent marker, making sure that allow for the curved sides. It's better to cut it bigger at this stage.
- 7 Temporarily fix the EVA padding to the aluminium plate with a few strips of tape. Be careful to ensure that the padding follows the curved shape – there should be no room between the plate and padding.
- 8 Cut off the excess padding. The padding should be about 5mm bigger than the aluminium plate so that the board is protected from the edge of the plate as well.
- 9 This is the final big step. But before you start to tape, clean the aluminium plate and padding with benzene. This is absolutely essential to ensure proper bonding – especially when there's water around. Next, tape the complete plate and padding using consecutive, partly overlapping strips of tape. You can start somewhere in the middle and progress to the top and then the bottom, depending where your temporary patches of tape are.
- 10 You don't have to cover the padding at the back completely though. Just put some tape along and over the ends of the stretches, so that they last longer.
- 11 You're done! Mount the nose protector to the board with four stretches of the same tape, which works perfectly.
- 12 For the finishing touches, and to make your new nose protector look better than a bit of old home-made tat, apply a sticker or two. (Note also the turquoise colour of my old nose protectors, which I made for the 2001 Flows of the same colour.)



THE AUTHOR

Marjan Tkavec hails from Slovenia, where people ski the Alps in the morning and windsurf the Adriatic in the afternoon. He started windsurfing 15 years ago after his wife (a former racer) thoughtfully taught him on a sinker. Marjan caught the DIY bug at just 14, and found himself taking on increasingly ambitious projects, but insists that there is no connection to his professional life as a nuclear expert. His DIY credo is: "Simple solutions can solve big problems and everyone can do it". In his spare time he runs mtbslovenia.net, just in case you find yourself in Slovenia on a no wind day...



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