

Mindsurfing

Mindsurfing is a great thing to do. You always rip, the surf's always good, and you can do it anywhere, anytime: sitting in traffic, at work, during flat spells. I think I mindsurf more than I surf in the ocean, and I'm probably not alone on that score either because, let's face it, no-one surfs as much, or as well, as they wish.

And the fact is, surfing transfers itself to mental imagery so well. Bored? Sit back, close your eyes and rip like Kelly. Or imagine the view from inside Chopes. Quietly conjure up the feeling of weightlessness, imagine the view of the reef and the flash of the lip. It passes the time and feels damn good. But beyond enjoyment it can serve a purpose. Psychologists could no doubt explain why humans daydream, but I'm thinking of a purpose specific to surfing.

Shaun Tomson thinks so too. The 1977 world champ recently published a surfer's code whose second-last maxim is: *I will catch a wave every day, even in my mind*. Such is the importance Tomson places on keeping a mental connection during dry times. I've got mates working on the mines in Western Australia and they won't see the ocean for weeks or months, but they are surfers and they long for it. I'm sure they think about it at least once a day.

Mindsurfing can also fuel our creativity. In 2003, mad Monty Webber made one of the best surf movies I've seen...with no surfers in it. *Liquid Time* is composed of slow-motion sequences of boat wakes breaking along shallow sandbars near Webber's home on the North Coast of New South Wales. Shot at ultra-close range so the waves fill the entire screen, the dynamics and shape are identical to those of normal ocean waves, yet in reality they are no more than 20cm high. And they are perfect...utterly perfect! Watching *Liquid Time*, it is impossible not to imagine surfing these tiny waves. Just let reality take a raincheck and stuff yourself deep inside those perfect peelers. Imagine the view!

And it's not just food for the imagination: mindsurfing can help our real ocean surfing. Rather than just sit back and indulge ourselves, why not try to re-create our surfing fantasies in real life? Someone that understood this concept was surfing super-coach Martin Dunn. Back in the late 1980s, Dunn created Ripstix. Ripstix were stickers to be placed on the nose of your board with a picture of a surfer doing a manoeuvre – a re-entry, cutback or top-turn – with the body in perfect placement for that particular manoeuvre. Dunn understood the power of 'dream, see, do' and Ripstix provided the 'see', allowing surfers working on a particular manoeuvre to picture how their body should be positioned for perfect execution.

I think the idea, at least for competitive surfers, was great. I use past tense because they no longer exist. We're a self-conscious bunch, we surfers, and a Ripstix on the nose of your board went counter to the image we like to project of not trying too hard.

— *Stu Nettle*