

# SIMPLE TIPS FOR DOCKING YOUR BOAT

Docking your boat can be intimidating and stressful, especially for new boaters. Luckily, learning how to dock your boat takes a few simple steps and practice, lots of practice.

## OVERVIEW

- ✓ Check the wind
- ✓ Mind your speed
- ✓ Reduce the sail
- ✓ Keep the engine on
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings
- ✓ Learn the pivot point
- ✓ Don't be afraid to try again
- ✓ Always turn the wheel before applying power
- ✓ Use Short Bursts instead of steady power
- ✓ Practice, practice and practice!

## CHECK THE WIND

The wind plays a major factor and depending on the direction it is blowing. Let the wind and current be your friend.

- If the wind is blowing from the dock, approach at a steep angle, using reverse gear and prop torque to swing the stern towards the dock.
- If it's blowing towards the dock, plan to come 'alongside' a boat width or more away, allowing the wind to push you all the way to the dock.

## GO SLOWLY

The so-called cardinal rule of docking a boat is 'never approach the dock any faster than you're willing to hit it'. Just in case, always approach docks slow enough that if your docking job doesn't go as planned, major damage won't be done to your boat or the dock.

## REDUCE THE SAIL AREA

Particularly on a small boat, this can have a dramatic effect on how easy or how hard it is to dock. A bimini top or an enclosure can act like a sail on a powerboat, and throw you off.

## KEEP THE ENGINE ON

Never kill the engine(s) until all the lines are secure. Many people who don't know how to dock a boat will make the mistake of shutting down as soon as the boat is in the slip, but you never know if a line will be dropped, or when a piling will slip out of reach. Best to keep your engine on until all lines are secure.

## BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Always look. Even if you have backed into your slip 100 times before. The biggest issue is mooring lines. If any lines or your or a neighbouring slip fell into the water, currents could stretch it across your path. A tangled mooring line in your propeller, will hinder your docking ability and create a mess that could have been avoided.

## LEARN THE PIVOT POINT

An outboard or stern drive will steer from the stern, while many inboards will steer from a point forward of the transom. Learn your boat's pivot point to determine your turning ability in tight quarters.

## DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY AGAIN

This is especially important for sailboats, single-screw inboards, and other boats with a limited ability to maneuver. If the approach doesn't seem to be going well don't worry about having to back out for another try.

## ALWAYS TURN YOUR WHEEL BEFORE APPLYING POWER

Not during - or after - that way, you won't get a blast forward or reverse before the blast of the port or starboard kicks in.

## SHORT BURSTS INSTEAD OF STEADY POWER

This allows you to maneuver the boat without building up a lot of momentum, which can quickly get out of control.

## PRACTICE, PRACTICE AND PRACTICE!

The more you practice in different conditions the easier it will get. Be sure to have all your dock lines prepared prior to docking. It is suggested to have two bow lines and two stern lines tied onto both sides of the slip (if possible), with the stern lines crossed.

To view the KYC Tie-Up Standards, [click here](#).