



Aquatic Consulting Services

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Boating Tip #40: Returning to Port

Returning to port, entering a channel or basin

- Turn on the motor
- Head into the wind and furl the jib
- Line up with the channel and keep the red channel entrance buoy to starboard (RRR)
- Motor into the channel, staying to the right of center
- Close the main hatch over the companionway
- Drop the mainsail, flake the sail, and attach the sail to the boom with sail ties
- Move the main halyard from the head of the main sail to the keeper on the aft end of the boom
- Cover the sail
- Loosen the main sheet and boom vang, then place the main halyard on the winch and raise the boom about 1 foot. This will give the helmsman better visibility while docking.
- Prepare docklines and coil all other lines
- Attach fenders
- Open the gate in lifelines
- Assign line and boat hook handlers

Docking (Bow First)

- Slow approach to dead slow
- Start turning when the bow passes the neighboring boat
- Position the boat at a 15° angle to the dock
- Shift into neutral
- Reverse if necessary to slow your speed or straighten out
- Add a left turn if making a starboard side landing to counter the paddle wheel effect
- Have line handlers step down onto the pier and snub the docklines with a round turn around the cleats
- Kill the diesel engine with the “stop” button
- Secure all lines

Docking (Stern In)

- Make a port turn to drift the bow to port
- Reverse prop wash will move the stern in line with the bow
- Back up slowly
- When there is enough momentum to dock, shift into neutral
- Back into the slip
- Apply forward thrust to stop the boat
- Have line handlers step onto the pier and snub the docklines with a round turn around the cleats
- Kill diesel engine with the “stop” button
- Secure all lines

After docking

- Flemish the dock lines
- Tie off the dinghy
- Reattach the shore power cord, then turn on the 30 amp breaker
- Turn off the inverter
- Leave the battery dials on “both” when leaving the boat and plugged in to shore power so batteries will charge
- When anchored or moored, switch off the DC main breaker so the batteries will not be drained (unless DC power is needed to run an appliance such as a refrigerator)
- Turn off all unused DC toggle switches on the electrical panel
- Leave the bilge pump on “auto”
- Clean and wash down boat and make ship shape
- Log the time of arrival at your destination and the distance traveled