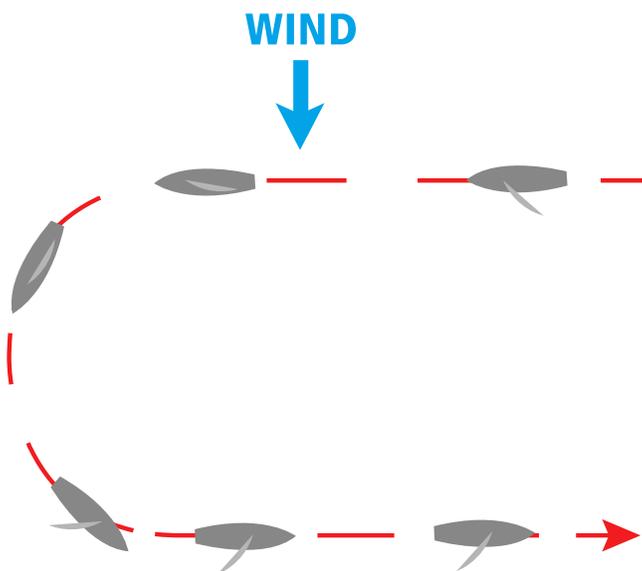


JIBING A SAILBOAT

side 1

Introduction

This sailing tutorial explains what a jibe (occasionally spelled gybe) is, how to jibe a sailboat, and the challenges jibing presents.



Definition of Jibing

Jibing, one of the other turning maneuvers is simply the opposite of a tack. Recall that during a tack, the bow of the boat passes through the wind. During a jibe, the stern of the boat passes through the wind.

Hazards During a Jibe

We teach tacking before jibing because tacking is a safer turn. During a tack, the bow of the boat passes through the no-go zone. That causes the boat to lose some speed. Those two factors cause the mainsail to gently pass from one side to the other. When jibing, the bow does not pass through the no-go zone. This means that the boat will always have wind in its sails. The boat goes faster, and the wind quickly forces the mainsail and boom to slam across to the other side at

high velocity unless you control it. Because of those concerns, the likelihood of a capsize and the risk of getting injured is greater during a jibe. However, by the time you jibe in this class, you will be fairly comfortable handling sailboats, and jibing shouldn't be a big deal.

Jibing Procedure

The biggest procedural difference between a tack and a jibe is pulling in the mainsail prior to executing the jibe. Remember that during a tack, you leave the mainsail alone, at least until after the turn. With a jibe, if you leave the mainsail alone, the boom would slam to the other side of the boat as explained above. If you pull the mainsail all the way into the center of the boat before you jibe, then the sail will only have a small distance to travel which reduces the force behind it. Other than that, the steps are very similar to tacking.

Steps of a Jibing Maneuver

- 1 Helmsman gives first command, "Ready to jibe?"
- 2 Crew looks 360° around the boat, gets ready to jibe, and says, "Ready!"
- 3 Helmsman pulls the mainsail all the way in.
- 4 Immediately prior to jibing, helmsman says, "Jibe Ho!"
- 5 Helmsman pulls the tiller away from the mainsail.
- 6 As sail switches sides of the boat, the helmsman and crew switch sides of the boat.
- 7 Helmsman lets the mainsail back out.
- 8 Once on course, helmsman brings tiller back to the center of the boat.
- 9 Trim sails and sail away.



LEO ROBBINS
COMMUNITY
SAILING CENTER

SAIL • KAYAK • STANDUP PADDLE

CITY OF
VENTURA
PARKS, RECREATION &
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
www.cityofventura.ca.gov

JIBING A SAILBOAT (CONTINUED)

side 2

Step 1: Helmsman gives first command, "Ready to jibe?"

Just like with a tack, it is a good idea to inform everyone on the boat of your intent to jibe. The majority of the time, this is done using some standard commands. The first command tells your crew to get ready to jibe. You can use, "Ready to jibe," or you can choose something else, but whatever you choose, it should be short and concise. Below are the two most common commands given at this stage.

- "Ready to jibe?"
- "Prepare to jibe!"

Again, you can use one of these, or you can make up your own command, but you should not stray too far from those phrases listed above. If you do, your crew might not understand what you mean.

Step 2: Crew looks 360° around the boat, get ready to jibe, and says, "Ready!"

Just as with tacking, one of the crew's most important jobs on a boat is to serve as a lookout since the helmsman often has difficulty seeing all the way around the boat. So, before a jibe, the crew needs to make sure that it's clear. Then, they get ready to jibe. Finally, once they're ready, the crew informs the helmsman by saying, "Ready!"

Step 3: Helmsman pulls the mainsail all the way in.

This step should be done immediately prior to the jibe. If you pull your mainsail in, and don't turn, then your boat will heel (lean over) a lot, and in a high wind, it might capsize. The moment the sail is in all the way, execute the jibe. If you are trying to jibe around some point, you should time it so that you just finish pulling in your sail as you pass the point.

Step 4: Immediately prior to jibing, helmsman says, "Jibe Ho!"

Again, just like a tack, you are informing everyone on your boat that you are about to execute the turn. You can say whatever you want, but the following are the two most commonly used phrases. (The vast majority of sailors use, "Jibe Ho!")

- "Jibe Ho!"
- "Jibing!"

Step 5: Helmsman pulls the tiller away from the mainsail.

If tiller toward the sail causes the boat to tack, then tiller

away from the sail should cause the boat to jibe. A jibe is a downwind turn, the mainsail is on the leeward side of the boat, and the tiller moves in the opposite direction that you want to turn. Moving the tiller away from the mainsail is equivalent to moving the tiller toward the wind which causes the boat to turn downwind.

Step 6: As sail switches sides of the boat, the helmsman and crew switch sides of the boat.

Again, this step is the same as with a tack. The helmsman is always supposed to face the mainsail, so if the main switches, the helmsman needs to switch. When everyone switches sides at the exact same time as the mainsail, the weight in the boat stays more evenly distributed, and the boat will heel less, which reduces the risk of capsizing.

Step 7: Helmsman lets the mainsail back out.

This is the second most important step in a jibe. As soon as the mainsail switches sides of the boat, the mainsail needs to be let back out. In a light wind, if the mainsail is left in tight after it switches sides, most likely, nothing will happen. In a strong wind, if the mainsail is kept in tight after it switches sides, it will fill and, at best, make the boat heel way over. It might also make the boat capsize. The only reason the sail was pulled in was to minimize the speed at which the sail switches sides; once the sail has switched, there is no reason to have the sail in tight and a lot of reasons to have the sail loose.

Step 8: Once on course, helmsman brings tiller back to the center of the boat.

This step is fairly self-explanatory. Once on the desired course, stop turning, by bringing the tiller back to the center of the boat.

Step 9: Trim sails and sail away.

Once finished with the turn, trim the sails for the point of sail, and sail off into the sunset, or wherever you are heading.

Recap/Conclusion

In most ways, a jibe is very similar to a tack. There are a few differences. The commands are different, the tiller is moved in a different direction, and most importantly, you must pull the mainsail in before you jibe, or you will encounter problems. If you are ever in a situation in which a jibe might not be safe, you can always tack. Tacking is simpler and safer, it just takes longer.