

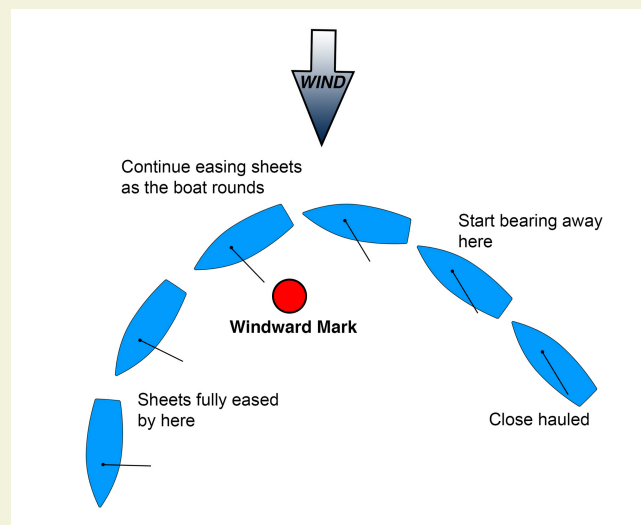


Bearing Away

Often in a race you will be sailing close hauled and want to bear away, or turn away from the wind. This could be while jockeying for position during the pre-start, needing to pass astern of a boat on the opposing tack (dipping), or rounding the top mark.

If you try to bear away from close hauled without easing the sheets, the boat will resist you. If the wind is strong enough, the boat will ignore the rudder completely and plow ahead on its close hauled course. The reason for this is that as the wind backs towards the stern, the CE moves aft and attempts to round the boat up to equalise the forces. Recall that we took advantage of this process when trying to get the boat balanced.

Like most sailing manoeuvres, bearing away requires coordination between sheet and rudder and needs practice. The objective in this manoeuvre is to keep the sails filled throughout. If you ease sheets too far or too quickly, they will spill air, stop driving the boat forward and you will lose speed.



Bearing Away at the windward mark

The diagram shows a rounding of the windward mark where a bear away manoeuvre allows us to transition from a close hauled course to running. A smooth bear away will see the boat accelerate smoothly around the mark and maybe sneak its nose in front of any close-by competitors.

The main thing to watch is that the boat doesn't slow down or stop because all the sheet is eased at once, or sheets are eased before the turn is commenced.