

Do's and Don'ts: Best Practices for Rigging Down the CSC Keelboats

These are some common mistakes in rigging down (i.e., putting away) the club keelboats that skippers may not be aware of, have forgotten, or do not check for when the task is assigned to inexperienced crew. Most of these practices are not covered in the club's keelboat manual, but they are still needed. These are not just a matter of personal preference – each item includes an explanation of the problems that occur.

- [Fenders](#)
- [Dock Lines](#)
- [Rigging](#)
- [Power Cords](#)
- [Motors](#)
- [Other](#)

FENDERS

Don't: Leave fenders hanging in the water.



Do: Make sure the fenders are clear of the water.



Why: Marine life grows fast on anything immersed in seawater. The next skipper who takes the boat out is going to have a mess to deal with when they haul slimy, nasty fenders onboard. The growth also stains the fenders.

Don't: Hang the fenders too far apart.



Do: Hang the fenders near the widest part of the hull – usually from the winch and the shrouds.



Why: Most of our keelboat hulls are painted. If the fenders are too far apart, the hull can rub up against the dock, wearing away the paint.

DOCK LINES

Don't: Tie up the boat with the fenders pinched between the hull and the dock.



Do: Make sure that there are a few inches between the fenders and the dock.



Why: If the fenders are being pinched, that means the dock lines are taut, and the dock lines can wear quickly where they run through the chocks if they are under a lot of tension. In addition, most of our keelboat hulls are painted. If the fenders are squeezed between the dock and the hull, they will wear away the paint on the hull. The fenders will also lose air faster if they are constantly being squeezed.

Don't: Leave spring lines hanging in the water.

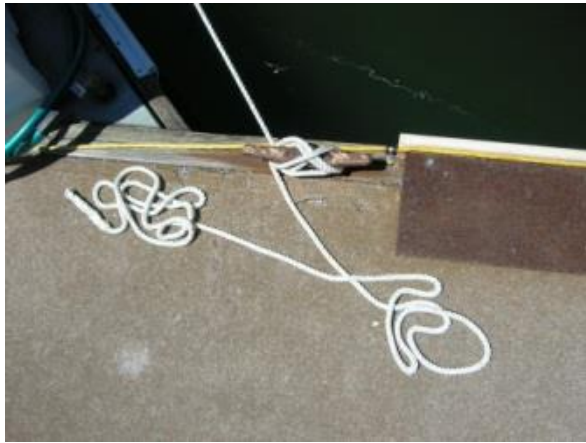


Do: Pull in on the spring line until the bow lines are fairly taut, then ease the spring line a few inches and make it fast. There should be some slack so that the dock lines are not too taut.



Why: As with fenders, lines hanging in the water quickly attract marine life and become a real mess. A slack spring line may also indicate that the line is not preventing the boat from drifting back.

Don't: Leave dock lines scattered across the dock



Do: Make coils. They don't need to be Flemish (although those are very salty-looking); just loosely coil the line and place it around the cleat.



Why: A jumble of line creates a tripping hazard. The lines can get kicked into the water, and they can get stepped on, too, which is not good for the line.

Don't: Run the dock lines directly to the dock cleats.



Do: Make sure the dock lines go through the chocks.



Why: On the Commanders, the aft chocks give the stern lines a better angle to the cleat. Chocks can keep the line from rubbing against the deck, too.

Don't: Tie the spring line to the dock cleat.



Do: Tie off to the eye next to the cleat.



Why: The cleats get crowded, which makes it more difficult for the next skipper who is taking out a boat. A line may not hold as well if it is tied over several other lines.

Don't: Run the dock lines through the chocks without the chafe gear.



Do: Position the chafe gear so they sit in the chocks.



Why: The dock lines get a lot of wear from the chocks. The chafe gear protect the dock lines and make the lines last much longer.

Don't: Tie up the boat in the end slip without proper spring lines.



Do: Use the excess bow and stern lines as aft and forward spring lines. They can be tied to the shroud turnbuckles or the winches (or the stanchions, as long as they are tied close to the deck).



Why: Spring lines help stop the boat from moving forward or backward. The bow and stern lines will still allow the boat to move around unless they are very tight, which they should not be.

RIGGING

Backstay tensioners

Don't: Leave the backstay tensioner tight.



Do: Make sure there is some slack in the backstay tensioner (it should still be cleated, though).



Why: Constant backstay tension puts strain on the mast and rigging, and they can develop a permanent set.

Halyards

Don't: Stuff halyards in the corners of the coaming or tie them around the handholds.



Do: Make hanging coils or place them around the cabin-top winches. Hanging them is best because the lines will dry faster.



Why: The lines are often wet, especially if you rinse off the boat after sailing, and they tend to stay wet for a long time if they are bunched up. If lines are in close contact with the wood, the wood absorbs water and stays moist, which promotes rot (note the dark spots on the handrail where this halyard was tied).



Line clutches

Don't: Leave the clutch handles up.



Do: Close the handles when not in use.



Why: If the handles get kicked or stepped on in the up position, they break easily. This applies while sailing, too, not just when putting the boat away.

POWER CORDS

Don't: Plug the power cord into the boat without first turning off the circuit breaker (at the dock box) or forget to turn on the circuit breaker after plugging the power cord into the boat.



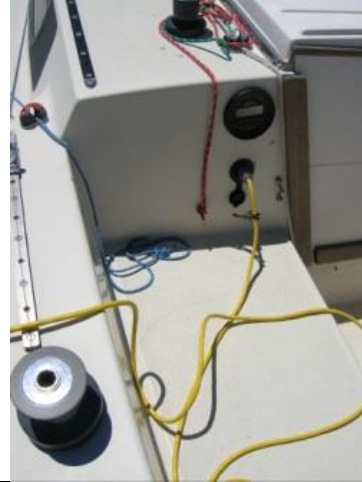
Do: Make sure the power is off before plugging in the boat and the power is switched on after the boat is put away.

Why: If the power is on when you plug the cord into the boat, you will hear a "pop," which is caused by an electric spark jumping from the cord to the receptacle. These sparks cause damage to the cord and/or the receptacle, so they have to be replaced more often.

Don't: Wrap the power cord around winches, stanchions, lifelines, etc.



Do: Drape the cord loosely; lay the excess on the cockpit sole or the seat.

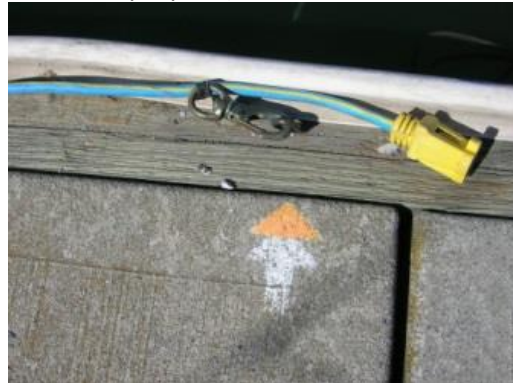


Why: The boat moves around. If the cord is wrapped tightly around something, the boat will put tension on the cord and pull out the clamps that hold the cord to the dock.

Don't: Leave the power cord loose when not in use.



Do: Clip the brass snap hook on the cord onto the eye (the slips have a screw eye marked with an arrow for this purpose).



Why: A loose cord can fall into the water, which is bad for power cords, and it is a tripping hazard.

MOTORS

Don't: Leave the outboard motor(s) tilted down.



Do: Make sure the motor is tilted up on your boat **and** any of the surrounding boats whose motors you may have tipped down before you pushed off from the dock.



Why: Some of the motors will sit partly in the water when tilted down, even if the mount is raised. Immersion allows marine life to form and, more importantly, promotes corrosion.

Don't: Leave a sharp bend or kink in the fuel line.



Do: Make sure that the motor is positioned so that there is some slack in the fuel line.



Why: The hose may deform permanently, causing a flow restriction. The hose can also be weakened, leading to a break in the fuel line (probably when someone needs it most).

OTHER

Garbage

Don't: Leave food or garbage on the boats.

Do: Clean up.

Why: Apart from the mess for the next skipper to clean up, leaving food or garbage will attract wildlife. This includes insects at the very least, and some other boats on J dock have had problems with rats. If food or garbage gets left on the boats, we will have rats on our boats, too. Imagine someone discovering a rat running around the cabin during a sail.

Radios

Don't: Leave the radio on after sailing.



Do: Check that the radio is off before locking up the boat.



Why: Leaving the radio on will shorten the life of the display. If you forget to plug in the power cord, the radio will run down the battery.

Sail Covers

Don't: Leave the cover open.



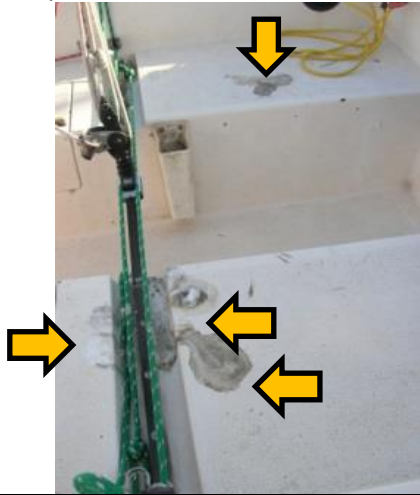
Do: fasten all of the buckles.



Why: Leaving the cover open allows it to luff in the breeze, which can damage the cover and leave the sail uncovered. If you find it difficult to close the bottom buckle at the mast, **ease the boom lift**.

Bird Repellant

Don't: Leave the Merits without a bird deterrent device in place.



Do: Replace the device before you leave the boat.



Why: The Merits are a favorite stopping place for birds, particularly egrets. They leave copious amounts of droppings (indicated by the arrows in the figure above) that are difficult to clean, and nobody likes to do the cleaning.

Hoses

Don't: Forget to stow the hose properly if you rinse down the boat.



Do: Coil the hose around the dock box, make sure none of it is hanging in the water, and tuck the nozzle under the hose so that it cannot fall into the water. Turn off the tap.



Why: As with fenders and spring lines, leaving part of the hose hanging in the water will guarantee that it gets covered in slime, creating a mess for the next person who uses it, and the metal parts of the nozzle can corrode. Leaving the hose uncoiled and strewn over the dock creates a tripping hazard. The taps and hoses can leak a bit, so a lot of water can be wasted if the tap is left on.