

Know your ropes - Part 2



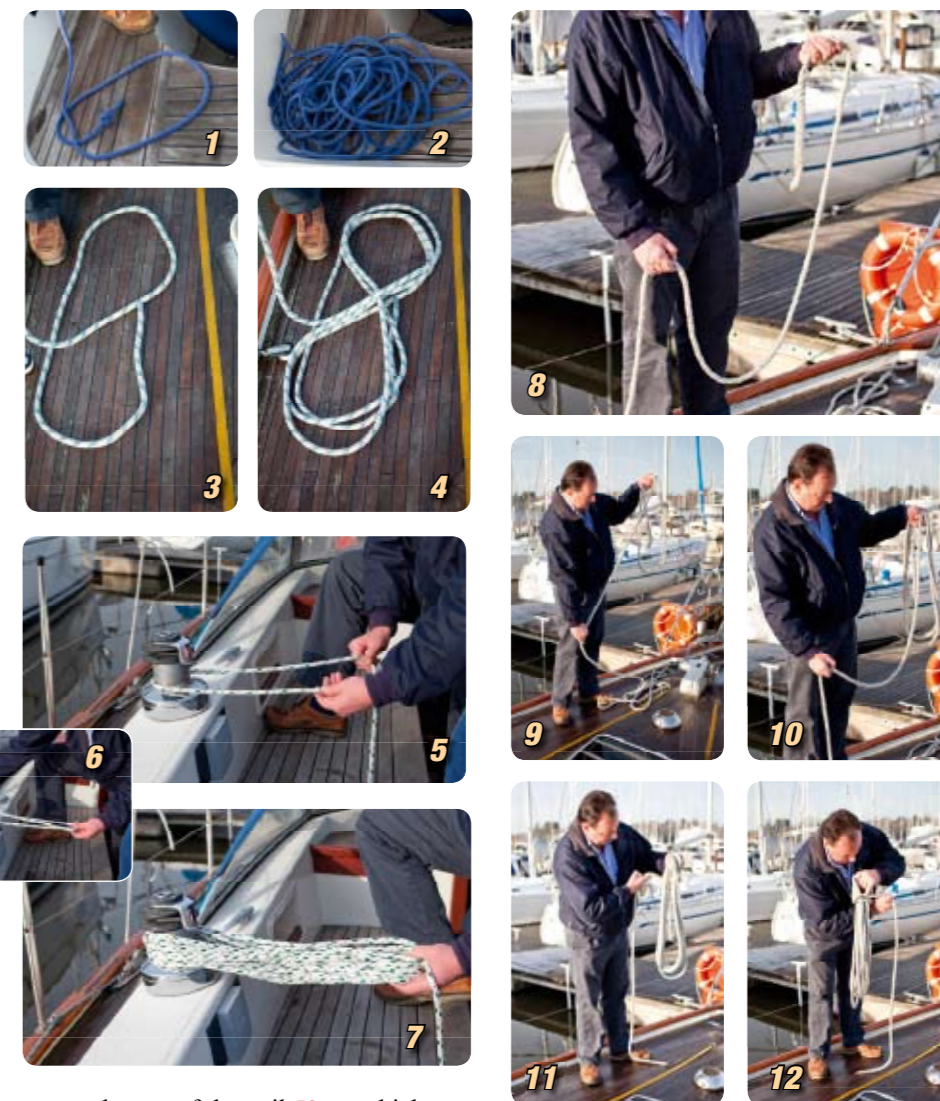
PHOTOS: ROD LEWIS

About the Author
 Duncan Wells is an RYA Instructor and Principal of Westview Sailing.

Wouldn't it be nice to know that every time we take a line from the locker it will run out snag free? This month **Duncan Wells** looks at techniques for making life easier when it comes to working with rope. And we warp a boat end for end in her own length.

Free running lines

When we want a line to run free we can flake it onto the deck **Pic 1**. Make sure there are no knots in it or creases as you do so and make what I call an 'intelligent pile', that's where you put down first what you require last and it will run free every time. Make intelligent piles for reefing lines, halyards and main sheets - any line that you want to run out snag free **Pic 2**. We can also prepare Figure of Eight coils which we can do by hand laying the rope out **Pic 3**. We put that which we want last down first and then coil the rope in a figure of eight on top **Pic 4**. We can also use a winch to help us with the figure of eight coil. Hold one end of the rope in your right hand and then with the other hand take the rope around the winch and back to your hand **Pic 5**, so that's a circle but now take the rope up to and around the winch **Pic 6** and cross back and forth as you do in a figure of eight shape **Pic 7** and you will have your figure of eight pile.

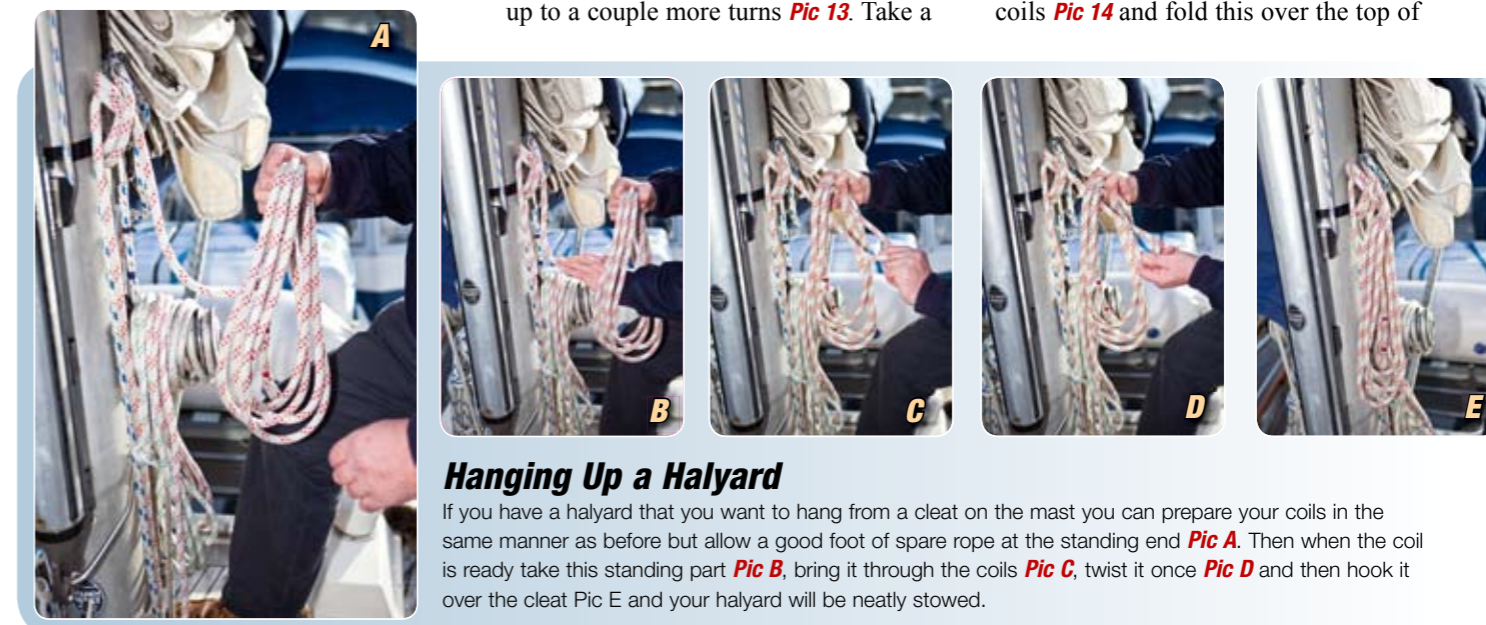


Snag free coils

And wouldn't it be nice to know that every line we take from the locker will run out snag free. Here's how to coil a rope, take the rope in the left hand **Pic 8** and coil it from the right hand into the left hand **Pic 9** give it a half turn twist as you do so - if you are left handed like me you will reverse the hands. Then leaving some rope still available **Pic 10** make a turn round the coil **Pic 11** and then a second

nearer the top of the coil **Pic 12** which will lock in place the first turn and then up to a couple more turns **Pic 13**. Take a

bight of the working end through the coils **Pic 14** and fold this over the top of

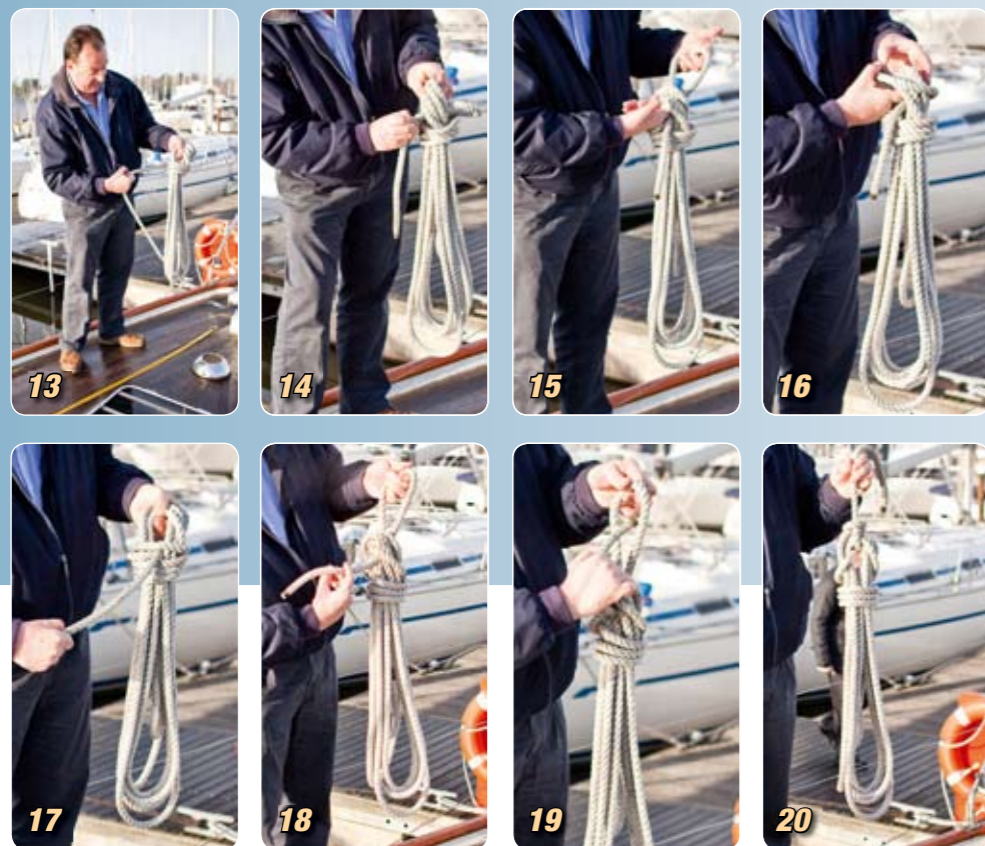
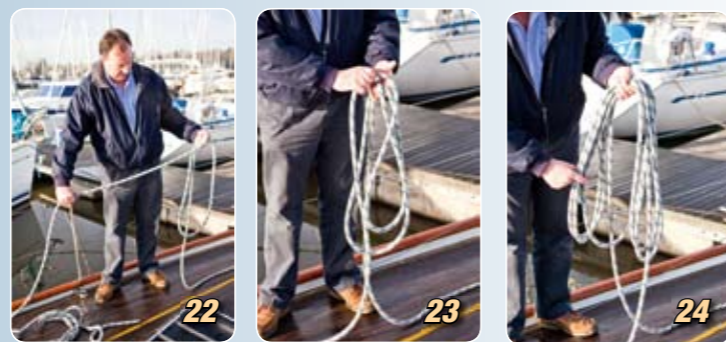


Hanging Up a Halyard

If you have a halyard that you want to hang from a cleat on the mast you can prepare your coils in the same manner as before but allow a good foot of spare rope at the standing end **Pic A**. Then when the coil is ready take this standing part **Pic B**, bring it through the coils **Pic C**, twist it once **Pic D** and then hook it over the cleat **Pic E** and your halyard will be neatly stowed.

Follow the climbers

Another way of coiling a rope to make sure it will run free is by coiling it the climbers' way. Again you coil from your right hand into your left hand but the first coil goes into the hand **Pic 22** and the second coil goes between the thumb and forefinger like so **Pic 23**. As you keep doing this you see that you are getting loops of line on either side **Pic 24**. At the end one finishes off with a Gasket Coil Hitch or the hanging up method. We haven't been able to find a name for this 'hanging up method' and it's in serious danger of being called the Wells Hitch. So if anyone knows better, please tells us, otherwise...



Braided versus ply

When coiling 3 strand rope one needs to coil it in the correct direction. If one coils it against the twist of the stranding then one is in danger of opening out the rope. When the rope is coiled correctly it feels right, natural and relaxed and it will hang in nice loops. To help it lie nicely one needs to give a little twist, a half turn of the hand, as one makes each loop. You can feel that the rope wants to do this so go with the direction of the twist. Braided rope often forms itself naturally into a figure of eight. I wouldn't fight this and would just let it happen if that's what the rope wants to do.

Warping end for end

Last Month we turned our boat end for end on a dock where we had plenty of space. We had our stern to the tide so we let the stern swing out and come to rest on the dock with the bow now facing into the tide. This month there is no space behind us and we are going to have to turn the boat around in her own length **Pic 25**. Imagine the bow of the next boat, astern, is where the blue water hose coil is. So we will need

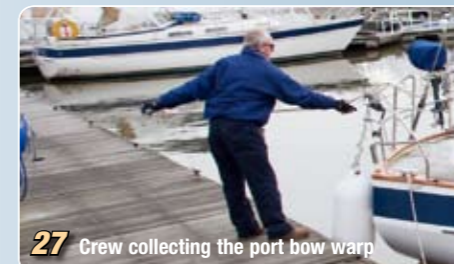
the coils **Pics 15 + 16** and back onto the turns you made round the coil, pull the working end tight and you have the Gasket Coil Hitch **Pic 17**. That won't come undone in the locker. If you want to hang this coil up you can take a bight of the

course I keep them inside the rail – we wouldn't want anything to slip into the drink by accident.

working end through the coils **Pic 18** and feed the working end through **Pic 19 + 20**. I keep my jib sheets on the pulpit in this manner **Pic 21**. That way they are off the deck, cannot accumulate dirt and I can hose them down to get rid of the salt with ease. A simple clove hitch on the pulpit does the trick. And of



Use plenty of big fenders **26**



Crew collecting the port bow warp **27**



The system for winching ourselves along the dock **28**



29



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warp, either by releasing tension on the winch or by removing it from the cleat on the dock. I was able to lift it gently over the cleat. I then stepped off onto the dock collected the port stern line from the lifebuoy holder **Pic 33** and got it under a cleat **Pic 34**. A little sweating of the line and we had the boat where we wanted her **Pic 35**. The less tide you have, the better for this exercise. Slack water would probably be best. In fact when we did this exercise for the photo shoot, despite our best laid plans, we ended up with very little tide indeed. If we were facing the other way with our stern to the tide we would use the same system only this time we would take a warp from the cockpit winch to and through the port bow cleat and back up to the dock near our stern and we would winch on this. Here it is very important to fender up the bow as we will be using this as the pivot point for the turn. Of course one doesn't have to rush things and as ever it might be just as well to sit back put on the kettle and wait until the tide is right for our purposes.

to time this manoeuvre carefully as we want to be very nearly on slack tide, or at least not have too strong a tide to contend with. Let us assume that we are starboard to and bows on to the tide at the moment and we want to turn the boat because we will be leaving on the next tide and therefore want to be heading into it as we leave. First fender up the port side and the transom. We are going to be rolling the boat around on her transom so the more fenders the merrier. We used Big Bertha for the critical part, the starboard side and a general fender for port **Pic 26**. Move the boat forward as close to your neighbour ahead as possible to give yourself the maximum amount of space. Set a warp from the port bow, down the port side and outside everything on the pushpit and ready to be collected by the crew on the dock to help the bow round if the tide is really slack **Pic 27**. Now take a warp from the stern cleat on the starboard side along the dock to a cleat up near the bow and then back under the guard rail and up to a winch in the cockpit **Pic 28** You are going to use this to winch yourself along

the dock. Set a port stern line, coil it and have this on the pushpit ready for later – I hung the coils from the cup of one of our lifebuoy holders **Pic 29**. Then push the bow out into the tide but keep control of the bow, under a cleat if necessary, so as not to allow the boat to swing around too quickly with the tide **Pic 30**. From here it is a question of controlling the amount of bow you allow out into the tide with the degree to which you ease the boat up the dock **Pic 31**. Once the boat is at 90° to the dock it will be a matter of the starboard warp and the port transom which prevent her from turning, so keep winching in until there is room to allow the tide to push her bow back in to the dock **Pic 32**. Then we need to lose the starboard