

Dipping the Lug (on a Cornish Pilot Gig)

A method that does not involve lowering the yard to the deck, disconnecting the strop and hauling the entire rig aft to clear the mast before rehoisting onto the new tack – thus minimising hazard from clutter and movement within the very limited working space onboard.

Crew Disposition

Bow – Windward Mast – Leeward Mast – Captain of the Mast* – Mainsheet* – Helm/Cox

Note that the Windward and Leeward Mast designations swap at each tack but the individuals remain in their positions each side of the Maststep. Captain of the Mast* (Mainsheet* may carry out the role with a short crew of 5) keeps a close watch coordinating the mast operations on behalf of the cox who just calls out the commands!

Ready to Tack – Sequence of Commands

NBB windward and leeward in this sequence refer to the ORIGINAL TACK!

1. **Stand by to tack.** (All crewmembers get ready to carry out their part in a well-practiced and slick team.)
2. **Ease the mainsheet.** (The mainsheet eases the sheet to de-power the sail and help release the tack. The sheet is then progressively eased to allow the peak to rise upward when necessary.)
3. **Ease the yard and belay.** (The windward mast eases the halyard and lowers the traveller a couple of feet – *unnecessary if reefed* - then belays the halyard at the forward side of the mast foot. This gives the traveller more scope for it to rotate around the mast into the new tack position as the yard is swung and lowers the rig's centre of gravity to improve stability. The mast foot belay aids transfer to the leeward mast.)
4. **Let go and pass the tack.** (The bow lets the tack go and passes it aft to the leeward mast).
5. **Haul down the tack and pull through the wind.** (The leeward mast starts to haul down the tack and luff of the sail, pulling the forward end of the yard downwards – whilst keeping hold of the tack. The bow takes the oar from the leeward side and starts to pull the bow around through the wind onto the new tack heading. 2 oars should be stowed forward – 1 on each side of the gig – ready for the bow to use when required.)
6. **Avast pulling.** (The bow ships his oar and prepares to take the tack at the next command.)
7. **Swing the yard and pass the tack.** (The leeward mast should now have the yard almost vertical with the forward end downwards. The yard, tack and luff are then passed to the windward mast around the aft side of the mast along with the forward bunt of the sail which must also be cleared around the mast. When clear, the leeward mast transfers the halyard from the mast foot belay onto his gunwale cleat keeping tension to maintain the traveller at the slightly lowered height.)
8. **Secure the tack.** (The windward mast passes the tack to the bow. The bow secures the tack to the bow hook on the (OLD) leeward side. The forward bunt of the sail is now ready to start filling onto the new tack – this can be used *with great caution* to help the bow onto the new tack – and the aft end of the yard will have been lowering as the tack is passed forward. The mainsheet must carefully adjust the mainsheet to avoid prematurely powering up the rig.)
9. **Hoist the yard and belay.** (The leeward mast hauls up on the main halyard to the full hoist yard position – or the appropriate reefed position – then hardens up and belays the halyard.)
10. **Trim the mainsheet.** (The mainsheet hauls in to trim and power up the mainsail – **and off you go on the new tack – SIMPLES!!**)