

Lowering and Raising the Mast - Cabin Boat

The mast must be lowered to pass through bridges and sometimes it is recommended to reduce windage when to quanting against a strong wind.

Lowering the mast

Lower the cabin top and secure the boom in the short crutches.

Halyards should be secured to the cleats on the tabernacle. There is a good change of them getting in a muddle if they are left on the spars or looped onto the shrouds. The jib does not have to be lowered completely but the top should be lowered to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ way down the mast.

Undo the luff line (the lacing holding the sail to the mast) if fitted. Undo the parrel line holding the gaff onto the mast and lay the gaff to one side of the boom. Remove the forehatch cover and lay to one side.

The mast can be lowered and raised by one person but it is easier and safer with two. One should stand on the right side of the foredeck and the second on the cabin top. The masts on the 2- and 4-berth boats are well balanced but the short foredeck on the 3-berth boats means that there is less counterbalancing force.

Ensure that the topping lift is not tight. Remove the 'gate' from the tabernacle and stow safely in the forepeak where it cannot fall overboard. If the gate is tight it may be necessary to pull back on the forestay.

Undo the forestay and push the mast back until it starts to move. If there is some reluctance, the second person can help it to move by pulling on the topping lift near the end of the boom. Lower the mast slowly. As the forestay becomes less effective the second person can help to lower the mast into the crutches. As the foot of the mast rises up, make sure that the falls of the forestay sit on the counterweights. This will give more control as the mast comes down and will help to give more purchase when the mast is raised.

Once the mast is secure in the crutches, gather up all the shrouds and halyards and use sail ties to hold them neatly to the mast. This will leave the well clear for the helmsman and the decks clear for quanting.

Raising the Mast

Raising the mast is done in the reverse order.

Remove the ties holding the shrouds and halyards. The first person should be on the foredeck with the forestay: when starting to raise the mast it can be helpful to push down on the foot of the mast. The second person should be on the cabin top and give the mast an initial lift: he should then keep a good look-out to ensure nothing gets hooked up on the cabin top or cleats. Do not force the mast if it will not go up smoothly - find out what is obstructing it.

Once the mast is up, secure the forestay, replace the gate and replace the hatch cover. Pull the gaff jaws to the mast and re-tie the parrel line. Remember to re-tie the luff line, if fitted, when the mainsail is raised. Swap the short crutches for the long ones if not raising the sails immediately.