

Windward Passage Mainsail Reefing Procedure

1. It is very difficult to reef the mainsail with the wind aft the beam as the luff will bind in the track and the possibility of an inadvertent gybe is always present. Before reefing, steer a course to bring the wind forward of the beam, the closer to a tight reach (the best position) the better. If the wind is too strong to come into the wind, furl the Genoa while off the wind then come into the wind.
2. It is best to not bring the boat above a tight reach as the mainsail will luff badly and this can damage the sail.
3. Once on your reefing course, take up on the topping lift so that the boom will not drop on to the Bimini when the main halyard is released.
4. Slacken the main sheet until there is a large bubble at the luff of the sail. This takes all the tension off the luff.
5. Release the main halyard and have crew go forward to the mast and bring the sail down to the desired reefing point and hook the reefing cringle on to the reefing hook at the forward end of the boom.
6. Tension the main halyard.
7. Tension the appropriate reefing outhaul by hand until it becomes difficult then use the halyard winch to tension the outhaul until the reefing attachment at the leech of the sail is close to the boom. Use the winch handle instead of the electric winch motor as one can tear leech of the sail with too much tension.
8. Fall off to your desired course and sheet the mainsail.
9. Carefully let off the tension on the topping lift and watch to see that the boom is not dragging on the Bimini. If it is dragging, increase the tension on the reefing outhaul.