

# Points of Sail

There are three basic points of sail:

Close Hauled (also called “sailing to windward”, “upwind sailing” or “beating”) – sailing with the front of the boat as close as possible to the direction the wind is coming from without the sails luffing. The sail(s) are pulled in.

Running (also called “downwind”) – sailing with the wind coming from behind the boat. The sails are out.

Reaching – sailing with the wind coming across the side of the boat. The sails are part way out.

NOTE: you cannot sail directly toward the wind.



These boats are close hauled. The sails are pulled in close to the center of the boat. Two have the wind coming over their right (starboard) side and the one on the right has the wind coming over the left (port) side of the boat.



This boat is sailing downwind. You can see that the sail is way out – showing that the wind is coming from behind the boat.



These boats are sailing downwind too. With the wind coming from behind the boat, the main sail is way out. Because the wind is coming from behind the boat however, the jib would be blocked from the wind if it were on the same side as the main. By sailing “wing and wing” both sails can be effective.



This boat is sailing on a reach. The sail is part way out and the wind is coming over the left (port) side of the boat.