

obstacle, to prevent excess heeling in a hard puff, or when you're changing course.

To head off (also called to bear off, bear away, fall off), swing the bow of the boat away from the wind. Fill the sails if they are luffing. Heading off will also make a boat heel more if it is sailing on the wind or a close reach.

To come about or tack, head the boat up and swing the bow through the wind by holding the tiller to leeward (the side the boom is on) until the sails cross the boat and fill on the other side. Bring the tiller back amidships when the boat begins to move on the new tack. This maneuver can be done slowly in smooth water, but in a chop or big sea it is best done quickly to minimize the possibility of the boat getting in irons (stopped dead or going backward).

In coming about, a boat sometimes loses headway. If a boat headed into the wind is stopped dead or going backward, it is said to be in irons.

To get out of irons, back the jib, and put the tiller in the opposite direction so that the rudder is on the same side as the jib. This maneuver should throw the bow around. Trim the jib and then the main. This should get you moving again.

Points of Sailing

As far as the wind is concerned, there are just three ways to sail: with the wind, against the wind, and across the wind. These are known as the points of sailing, and each has a special word to identify it. Sailing with the wind (the wind behind you) is called *running*. Sailing across the wind is called *reaching*. Sailing toward the wind is called *beating*.

