

## HOW TO SAIL BETTER

# Busy anchorages

Pip Hare shares her tips for dropping the hook in a congested spot

**O**ne of the ultimate cruising freedoms has to be the ability to anchor where you choose, without being confined to marinas.

Sometimes, however, lateral thinking will be required to get into a tight space.

## Set a second anchor

This is time-consuming but can resolve a heap of boat handling issues, allowing you to set a second 'positioning' anchor in shallow water.

Transfer your second anchor, rope and chain into the bottom of the tender. I use two plastic tubs – one with chain, one with rope – lowered on a halyard. Attach the bitter end to a secure point on your tender. Ensure the chain is loaded into the bucket so it will run freely from the top. Attach a line and buoy to the tripping ring – you'll use this to drop the anchor.

In your tender, manoeuvre upwind of the spot where you wish to drop the second anchor then gently lower it over the side by the tripping line, but don't drop it. You will need some sort of tube cover to protect your tender. Drift back holding the anchor just above the seabed then drop when you reach the desired spot, making sure the chain is ready to run out.

Allow the dinghy to drift downwind until around one-third of the distance back to the yacht, then apply power to give some direction. If the weight of the chain makes it difficult to steer, pay it all out, then make your way back to your yacht when there is rope only. This will be essential if you are alone in the dinghy. Once back, make off the tender before passing up the anchor rope and pulling in the slack.

Recover the anchor using the tripping line, ensuring first there is no weight on the chain pulling in the other direction. For well dug-in anchors, drag the tripping line forward using the tender. Once the anchor is up, pull up the chain – dumping it into a waiting bucket – and slowly drift back to the boat.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Lloyd/Alton

### Pip Hare

is a professional yacht racer. Following a successful 2020-21 Vendée Globe solo around the world campaign, she is now preparing for the 2024 event in her IMOCA 60, *Medallia*.

Setting a second anchor is time-consuming but is effective in a busy anchorage



Nic Compton

## V-anchoring

This method is great for reducing your swinging circle in anchorages where the wind is gusty, or if a shift in wind direction is forecast. Use two anchors of similar type and size from the bow.

Before setting the anchors, monitor the wind direction for a couple of minutes, this will help to work out where to set your second anchor. Use the predominant wind direction to position your first anchor upwind of your chosen spot.

Fall back as normal and make sure the anchor is well dug in. Once secure, lay the second anchor either from aboard or using the dinghy. If aboard, gently motor upwind using the secondary wind direction – you may need to pay out the primary chain so as not to trip it.

Drop the secondary anchor then fall back on it, using the engine if necessary, to your original resting spot, adjusting both anchors to secure your position.

## Side anchoring

Use this method to sit off a sea wall in a swell. Tie up alongside the wall using long warps and springs stretching ahead and astern. Then use the dinghy to set a small anchor immediately off the beam. Don't be tempted to set this too close to the boat, you may need a reasonable amount of scope to allow access to the dock.

Pull up on the anchor to sit off the dock; use a breast line to pull in for access if required. If concerned about passing traffic, use all the chain or weigh rope down close the boat. You can also place a marker buoy along the anchor chain at a distance so no one passes between.

## No swing

I've used this method to find a spot inside the walls of a tiny fishing harbour among the moored boats and to tuck into coves out of the swell. Find your spot then drop the main anchor as normal from the bow. It's well worth setting the anchor further away and using extra scope to safeguard against dragging.

Once in place use two stern anchors to stop your yacht from swinging. These should be placed, again with plenty of scope, at angles perpendicular to the transom – remember these anchors are designed to stop swinging rather than movement towards the anchor.

If in a location with tidal flow, or expecting a 180° wind shift, a stern anchor should be used.

## TOP TIPS

### Kit list

- **Double bow roller** – vital if considering the V-anchoring method
- **Two main anchors** – I carry two plough-type anchors, one smaller than the other and with 20m of chain
- **Two subsidiary anchors** – these are as large as can be reasonably raised and lowered by hand from a dinghy. I used a 15kg plough and a 10kg grapnel anchor, both with 10m of chain and then warp
- **Tripping lines** of a diameter that will be comfortable to haul by hand. I recommend 6mm minimum