

# *Stepping the Mast Solo*

## CAPTAIN SCOTT

### **Stepping the mast and all the disclaimers!**

At the request of several folks, I've decided to document how I step the mast on our Chrysler 22 foot sloop. These photos were taken prior to renaming her, polishing her and bottom painting her. She looks a lot nicer now! 8)

When clicking the small photos you will receive a copy of the full sized photo all of which are quite large. Some browsers may automatically resize the larger photo to fit your screen. If this happens you will lose resolution of the photo. Make sure you are viewing the full size of the photo and the details are quite clear.

Please note this is in no way any indication as to how you may step your mast. The forces and stresses involved here are quite strong and can cause you severe personal injury or possibly even death if you improperly use your own rigging in a fashion it was not designed for.

OK then Since you've clearly read the above and understand that in no way can we be responsible for what you do with your boat and your boats hardware, here is what we do:

1. Make sure the boat and trailer are secure. I leave the trailer either hooked to a tow vehicle or blocked in the front and stern to avoid the trailer tipping. Also block the tires of the trailer so it can not move.
2. Slide the mast back on the boat and properly attach the base of the mast to the mast step. Our 75 has a pinned hinge. Our 76 does not. We have not used this method on our 76 and currently unaware of as to if this method will work. I assume it will.
3. Attach the shrouds and aft stay. FYI we do NOT ever detach the shrouds or aft stay for travel on the trailer. The forestay however must be attached at the top of the mast but not at the bow of the boat. For convenience I hook a long bungy from the bow toe rail to the bottom of the forestay. This keeps the forestay from swinging around and fouling the rigging. Anywhere on the toe rail that holds the forestay taught is fine. It will loosen as you raise the mast so pull the bungy snug or it'll come off!
4. OK, that is pretty standard stuff. Nothing new for



Why we do this!



Make sure the trailer is secure 1st!



A view of the lines and boom going up!



Check out the bridle and how it is hooked up.

you there assuming you've stepped your mast before. The next bunch of hookups are a bit confusing at first however once you've done it, it is not so bad and in reality pretty simple.

5. Hook up the bridles to the toe rail. On our Chrysler 22 the original docs indicate starting from the bow count back 23 holes and 32 holes. Mark the holes while your there! You'll be glad you did. One end of the bridle goes on hole 23 and the other on hole 32 from the bow. Each side is the same. Port and Starboard.
6. I have a two part jib halyard. Cable and rope. I see no reason why an all rop jib halyard will not work. The part of the halyard that clips to the head of the jib is clipped to an eye ring at the base of the mast. The other end of the halyard will be tied to the goose neck end of the boom somehow. You decide how. The length required here will take a couple of tries to get it right. Once you have it, mark the halyard! You'll want the boom to sit slightly less than 90 degrees straight up from the boom This will later allow for hooking up the forstay however I'm getting ahead of myself. Trust me on that one!! ; ) heh heh heh! Famous last words!!!
7. OK now some fun stuff. I use my port and starboard sheet for this however I will eventually make dedicated lines for this next step. Attach each sheet to the end of the boom with the goose neck. Yeah, the end you just tied the jib halyard to. Hopefully you tested the length of the halyard already so you won't have rework here. go back a step if you don't know what I'm talking about!!! LOL. I did several times!! Now with one end of the port side jib sheet already tied to the boom ( or otherwise clipped ) take the bitter end down through the center eye on the bridle and then back up to the eye on the mast. Since reaching the eye can be tough with the mast up I did not tie the jib sheet off here. I simply fed it through the eye and back to a cleat on the base of the mast! Do not tie it tight now. You'll be adjusting it soon. Now do the same with the starboard side sheet. Top of boom, through bridle, through eye on mast, and back down to cleat on base of mast. Again, tie it off but not pulled tight yet.
8. Now , I originally used the main sheet for this step but decided to make a dedicated line for this. Hook a block up to the end of the boom that has all those lines already on it. Hook a block up to the jib tack on the bow. Do not use the hole that the forstay is hooked up to. You'll need that! ; ) Now take a very long line, tie one end to the bow cleat. Run the other back up to the block on the boom you just added, and run it back through the block on the bow you just added, and then back to the starboard side



See the jib halyard?



See the port and starboard sheets



Instead of main sheet I use the jib blocks and a new dedicated line.



Time to raise the mast!

winch. I have a clutch jam cleat I run the line through. If you have one I recommend doing the same. It will hold the line for you when the time comes. Otherwise you're going to have to cleat it off by the winch.

9. Almost there!!! Stand the boom up if you have not already! Put the pin in the base of the mast, and set the outward end of the boom on the pin. Now you have a mess of lines above you almost as if you are making a tent! Cute huh! Again, make sure the boom is straight up and not leaning port or starboard. Use the sheets ( remember the lines running through the bridle, etc? ) to straighten the boom port and starboard. Snugg them up and tie them off at the base of the boom. Confirm the boom is leaning just slightly aft and less than 90 degrees to the mast. now pull that extra line tight that we just hooked up through the block on the bow and tie it off snug at the winch. The boom should be solidly held in place now without any hint of falling. Yeah, I know it is like wrestling an octopus the first time however it really does get easy after a few tries. I raised and lowered my mast several time at home before I had the guts to do it at the boat ramp! LOL! Quite the spectacle in a quiet neighborhood!!!!
10. Last step before the big moment!! However in my mind the most important! Check and double check everything!!! Picture the mast going up on your mind! Are the shrouds going to hook on anything? YES THEY WILL! Are the tangled? Fouled? Check the aft stay end to end! Double check your main halyard is secure at the base of the mast on BOTH ENDS! LOL! Experience speaking there ! A can not express enough how important it is to make sure you've not fouled any lines. Trust me!!! You have!! Find them or you have to wait until the mast is partially up before they show themselves!!!
11. That's it!! take a breath, look around, make sure no one is looking, and have at it! That long line you fed back to the winch? uncleat it, wrap it on the winch and start cranking! It is a 2:1 purchase so it seems hard at first however it gets progressively easier quite fast! Maybe a gentle lift of the mast is in order of you do not have the mast supported high on the end. Crank slowly! You'll want to just zoom it right up and you can! it is that easy to raise however, remember that line or shroud I said would get fouled? Yeah, there it is! LOL! Lower the mast and go clear the line!!! Hah hah!! You thought you'd cleared 'em all didn't ya! LOL! I like the using of the winch because I can stand in the cockpit and watch all the lines as the mast goes up. I also am very carefull to never stand under the mast as it goes up. No reason to take a risk there.



Going up!



Hey! This is easy!!



Half way there!!



Head forward to pin the forstay! Gotta find the dang pin I dropped!

The use of the winch and jam cleat allow for stops part way up for photo ops :) and general looking things over.

12. Now the mast is up! Whew! It does get faster and easier. Remember when you hooked the forstay to a bungee somewhere on the toe rail? Now go get it and pin it to the bow!! If you have not fouled any lines or lost a halyard, go ahead and TAKE PICTURES!! It is a cool feat to accomplish! Now remove all them lines from the boom, grab the silly pin holding the boom to the mast base, and disassemble the rest of your rig! I leave the bridle permanently affixed to the toe rail. I fear if I remove it for safe keeping I'll forget where I safely kept it! LOL!

Well, thats it !! Please remember, this is just here to show you how I do it. If you decide to use a similar method, please use extreme caution! If any of your lines slip or break you can end up in a world of hurt! Use common sense and extreme care when stepping your mast! Otherwise Have fun and I hope this helps you understand one of many methods for stepping a mast!

Captain Scott



A little nicer view of lady Jo after the cleanup. You can see the bridle still in place and the bow of the 76 C22 peaking out!



6 MB Video showing the mast going down and up