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GOOD OLD BOAT

Inspiring hands-on sailors



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To andy@goodoldboat.com

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Dear GOB Mail Buoy:

I entirely sympathize with Jay Miner's predicament with "Watermark" held by a cross wind on the dock. A strong cross wind once pinned me on Grand Marais' [Forestry Dock](#) with rocks too close fore and aft for motoring out; like Jay, I decided to stay for an extra day and had enjoyable dockside chats. But what happens if one simply must make a cross-wind exit—especially if one's boat, like our S2 9.2 "Sunyata" does not back confidently at all? Jay's "needed maneuver" in reverse with a cross wind is fearful to contemplate.

I'm experimenting with a transom spring line that I saw first on Endeavour Sailing School's [YouTube](#). Their set up regrettably pivots the boat's transom on the dock, requiring wrap-around fenders to protect the entire transom as it scrapes against the dock. One change makes this a technique to use for springing forward, with all lines in the cockpit, easily managed by a singlehanded sailor. Set up a spring line ['yellow' below] at roughly 45 degrees from your external aft cleat, double it around a convenient dock cleat, and tie up to your external aft cleat. When you engage slow forward gear, turn your boat to steer sharply *toward* the dock. The boat's forward motion, held against the aft-leading transom spring line will pull the bow off the dock while your boat's prop wash against the rudder will move the stern also away from the dock. The boat moves straight off the dock [see #1 below]; it's like having both bow and stern thrusters! After the boat is a foot or two away from the dock, you can slowly straighten the steering and the transom spring line will continue to pull the bow around [see #2 below]. When distant enough you can, at last, steer "away from the dock" and the boat will turn in a constrained tight circle [see #3 below]. Whenever you are ready, just slip the transom spring line and haul it in. With only forward motion, you're unlikely to foul the prop, but Dyneema and polypropylene lines both float. Our 30 foot boat with 10 foot beam can do such a complete U-turn inside 45 feet. By judiciously pulling in the transom stern line, mid-maneuver, you might make this even more compact. Tight spots in unfamiliar marinas might become a little less frightful.

