

Fast Penalty Turns (Advanced)

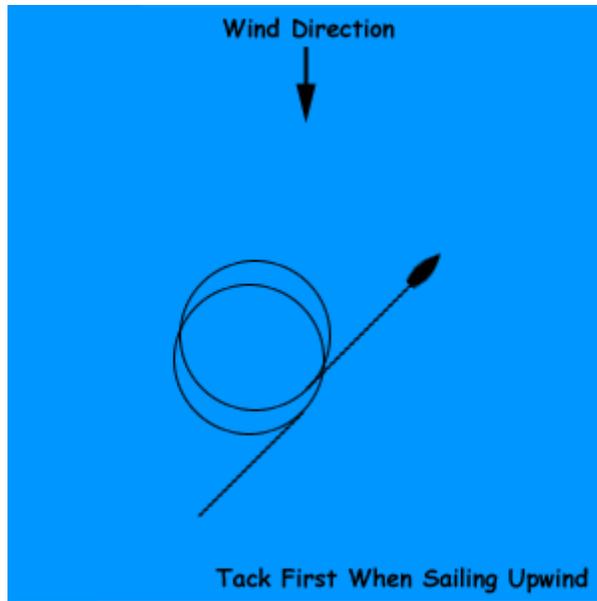
Despite our best efforts to avoid breaking the rules, there are times when it happens. In the old days, if you broke a rule you were disqualified from the race. Thankfully, one is now usually able to exonerate themselves by making some penalty turns (how many depends on the situation). Before we start talking about how to make fast turns, you should first read *Sailing without a Rudder* to learn many of the important techniques that will be discussed in this lesson.

When you hit a mark, you have to do a 360 degree turn (one circle). When you break almost any other rule, you have to do a 720 degree turn (two circles). The rules stipulate that you have to make two tacks and two jibes, and you can't do two in a row (such as two tacks and then two jibes - it has to be tack-jibe-tack-jibe or jibe-tack-jibe-tack). If you hit a mark and don't hear someone yell at you for hitting it, make your circle anyway. You may lose several boatlengths of distance, but you'll feel right knowing that you did the right thing and didn't cheat. Also, someone making penalty turns doesn't have any rights, so get out of the way of other boats before you make your turns.

The first thing to consider is what to do first: tack or jibe? If you're going upwind, tack first. When going downwind, jibe first. The reason is that tacking first upwind will bring you slightly farther upwind, and jibing first while going downwind will bring you slightly farther downwind. Since a 720 is two 360s, I'll just write down here how to make a fast 360 and you can put two of them together. In many boats, the only way to make your penalty turns is to do one circle, wait 5 seconds for your boat to start moving, and then do your second circle. Otherwise, you may get stuck with no speed and thus no steerage.

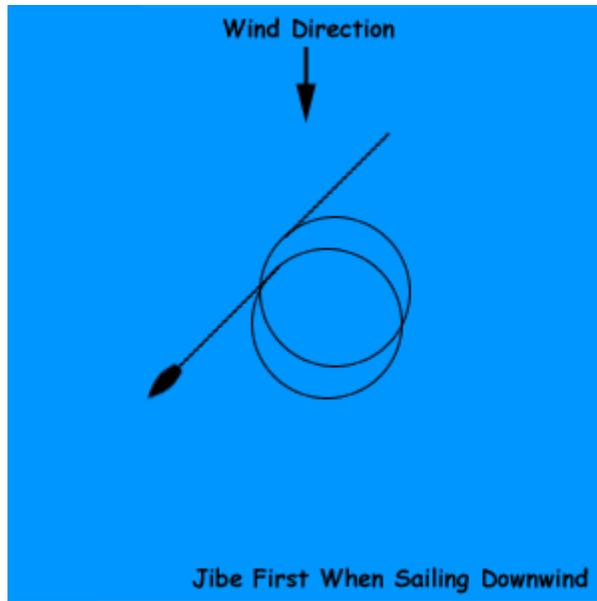
Upwind 360 - essentially a roll tack followed by a roll jibe

1. Tack first. Make sure that it's a roll tack (let boat heel slightly to leeward, when sails luff hike out to old weather/new leeward side, and as the sails fill, jump to new windward side and flatten the boat as you pull the sail in).
2. After you've tacked, bring the jib in and dump the main out to help the boat bear off faster. The jib will push the bow down, and dumping the main will help the stern come up as the boat spins on the keel.
3. Roll into a roll jibe by hiking out to windward as soon as you finish the tack. Heeling the boat to weather will also help you bear off. To roll jibe, heel to weather, pull the sail across the boat, and then flatten the boat by jumping to the new weather side as you trim the sail.
4. As you flatten the boat, allow it to continue rounding up to the same angle that you had been sailing at before you started your penalty turn. Also, take your time bringing the jib in, but get the main in right away - this will also help you head up quickly.



Downwind 360 - essentially a roll jibe followed by a modified roll tack

1. Jibe first. Make sure that it's a roll jibe (heel the boat way out to windward, pull the sail across the boat, and then flatten the boat by jumping to the new weather side as you trim the sail).
2. After you've jibed, bring the main in fast and take your time getting the jib in - a tight jib would try to push the bow down, and you want to round up instead. Bringing the main in fast will push the stern down and help you head up quickly. Also, allow the boat to heel to leeward so that the boat's heel angle will also help the boat to round up to the tack. You don't really want to flatten the boat after the jibe, since the boat's heel to leeward will help it round very quickly.
3. Roll into a modified roll tack by allowing leeward heel as you start the tack. When the sails luff, jump to the old leeward/new windward side and hike like crazy. You don't really want to let the sails fill and then flatten the boat like in a regular roll tack: you want to bear off as fast as possible after the tack. So, you hike hard to weather as the sails luff, bring in the jib, and dump the main as you complete the turn. This combination of hiking and sail trim will allow you to bear off onto your old course quickly.



There's one last item for you to do if you make a penalty turn - make sure that someone near you saw you do the turn, or write down the sail numbers of your closest competitors. That way, if you are called into the protest room, you can prove that you did the turn. Better yet, when a boat protests you, tell them that you will make your penalty turns so that they can watch you do your circles.