

# Practical projects

Great ideas and tips from PBO readers

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## Improving MOB survival

Sam Longley considers better man overboard recovery



There are lots of recommendations and procedures for MOB and to each his own. I decided to improve the procedures and kit on my boat for hoisting a casualty out of the water and stowing and deploying a danbuoy. I have also taken steps to aid self-recovery, in case I am single-handed and fall overboard.

### Hoisting MOB

The problem of hoisting a casualty out of the water can be solved in numerous ways but on my boat, I'd use the spinnaker pole uphaul which leads back to a cabin-mounted two-speed winch. There is an open cleat in front of the winch, rather than a clutch, to make it easier to jam in the uphaul in an emergency. The line is fluorescent orange so it stands out from the others.

The outboard end has a large carabiner which stows on the spinnaker ring on the front of the mast.

The uphaul is extra long so the carabiner will reach someone in the water all the way aft. I've threaded a plastic golf ball onto the halyard to prevent it from getting lost up

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE** Orange uphaul can be jammed into an open cleat; carabiner on end of uphaul for clipping to casualty; taped-on golf ball stops uphaul disappearing up the mast

the mast in the event someone on deck accidentally releases it. The golf ball is fixed in place with twine and tape at such a height that the carabiner can always be reached by someone on the cabin top.

### Dan buoy stowage

A dan buoy is no use stowed below, so I have it on deck and it sits in a length of plastic waste pipe, attached with cable ties to the push pit. The offcuts of the pipe were used



**ABOVE and RIGHT** Permanently rigged lines give a MOB something to grab quickly before the boat drifts out of reach



as winch handle holders. Likewise, the heaving line sits in a short length of 100mm soil pipe fixed in the same way.

### Self recovery

I've been over the side myself before. Once in the water you quickly feel completely helpless. Most yachts have nothing to grab onto and an upturned dinghy is not much use as a lifering either. My experience of dinghy sailing has shown that with sailing kit on, a 5m gap might as well be 500m.

Transferring from a tender to a yacht is a surprisingly frequent man overboard situation, but I realised that when sailing single-handed I regularly rig fenders and dock lines in outer harbours – and then often forget to clip on, somehow feeling safe in harbour. It's so easy to trip over your fenders and shore lines.

I now have a line over the side and a few lines at the stern permanently rigged, which always gives me a chance to grab something before it gets out of reach.

The boat may hit a dock wall before I get back on, but who cares so long as I don't drown. If there's a chance of survival then I'll take it!



**Plastic pipe offcut serves as winch handle holder**



**Danbuoy and throwing line are kept in plastic pipe**