

# Sailing a Pirate Ship Course 1

by Shadow Leratia

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## Prelude

- 1) Obtain a ship. You can steal one, or buy one but you need a ship and a suited place to rezz your ship. Docks for example on a pirate sim or when all else fails practice on Blake's Sea and rezz at the designated rezz points. BE certain your SHIP is on the approved list of ships for where you plan to sail it. Each Pirate community has it's own Approved ships list and those are subject to change from time to time. Get the latest Approved Ships List BEFORE you buy or steal one. Blake's Sea in general has no limitations in this regard.
- 2) Unpack your ship. Same as many things in SL, ships often come in some form of box or shopping bag. Drop that on the ground. Click on it, select open if it has not already asked you to accept the contents of the ship container.
- 3) Find and rezz the Hull section of your ship into the water. Wear the HUD(s) for your ship. Some have several choices, you may need to wear the Gunner's HUD and the Captain's HUD. Some ships do not have HUDs. If you can see the statistics in Chapter 1, everything is going well.
- 4) Right click on the rezzed ship and click on "Board". If there is no "board" option on the menu, click on Sit and see if you end up behind the wheel or in front of the tiller (the steering mechanisms) of your ship.

## Chapter 1: The Statistics of your Ship

Once you have rezzed the ship AND Boarded her, the fun begins. There are a wide variety of new things to pay attention to either on the HUD(s) of your ship or on the readout of the ships hull that is often displayed near the main (mizzen) mast of your ship.

This varies a bit from ship to ship. The most critical readings are the Wind Speed and Direction, your sails angle, and the sailing offset. Nice things to have are HUDs that show Angles of Iron and the depth of the water under your keel and such. Angle of Irons will be covered more in depth later. If you do not see statistics for your ship, there is a problem. Either the ship did not rezz correctly or you are not wearing the Captains' HUD correctly, you may not have raised your sails or something else has gone wrong.

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## Chapter 2: Sailing Offset

This is the most critical single piece of information on your display. Your goal is to get the offset to zero or as close to it as possible for maximum speed and air flow into your sails. You have to RAISE your sails as a first step. This allows them to catch the wind if the ship is facing the right direction. If your display is indicating RED, it typically means, either your sails are not raised or your ship is "In Irons" meaning you are facing directly into the wind approximately.

## Chapter 3: "In Irons" and Kedging

You will have to kedge in order to solve being "In Irons". Kedge is the nautical term for tossing an anchor over the side of your ship and by tugging on the rope of that anchor so you are pulling the ship to one side or the other until you are no longer "In Irons". Be patient when kedging, it takes a bit of time for the ship to respond to each kedge. Clicking the kedge buttons 20 times in one second will NOT change how fast your ship kedges. One click per minute should be approximately the right rate to kedge correctly and efficiently.

## Chapter 4: Underway and Trimming the Sails

Once you have the ship rezzed, boarded her and raised the sails, you should begin moving. You and your ship are now Underway. Pay close attention to the land and other obstacles and steer your ship using either the W A S D keys or your arrow keys on your keyboard.

Trimming the sails, refers to making them tight or loose enough to capture the wind optimally. The sail offset shows how far your sails are out of trim. You can make major adjustments to the sail offset using the up and down arrow keys on your keyboard. Minor adjustments by turning ever so slightly left or right. Up and down arrows are usually 10 Degrees of offset per key press. Tapping the left key (A) or left arrow key gives 1-3 degrees of change. Try to get the offset to Zero for maximum speed and performance. Some ships do not show the offset, in which case things become a bit more complicated. Then you need to get your sails' angle at 50% of the Winds' angle. This is the same as achieving 0 on the offset.

Some ships offer "Square Sails" that can be raised and lowered in addition to your normal sails. When you have your offset at 0 and your ship is not facing into the wind, you can raise the square sail and gain even faster speeds. If you raise the square when you are facing into the wind or close to it, your ship will often begin to travel backwards. This can be a nifty way of dodging a broadside in some situations.

## Chapter 5: Tacking

There will be times when the wind is just not in your favor. You want to sail to that island to the West but the winds are blowing West to East against the direction of travel you want. This is where tacking comes in. Tacking is the term for sailing in a zig zag pattern so you can overcome this "Wind" obstacle. You would sail North by Northwest then South by Southwest

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and then back to North by Northwest to overcome the wind blowing West to East. It takes time and patience and some skill, do not be discouraged if this becomes frustrating on your first attempts.

## Chapter 6: Ship to Ship Combat

You have mastered the mechanics and so on for sailing, You can pilot your ship to any point on the map with ease. Now you see splashes in the water near your ship or see a message from your ship shouting to the world, we have been hit. Someone has a canon ball or 20 with your ship's name on them. This is often how we say hello to strangers or even friends in pirate waters, do not be discouraged or forlorn, it is NOT personal. Be sure you have your canon HUD on, or if your ship does not offer one, that you can view your canon and click on them. Clicking on your canon fires a canon ball.

Cannon balls come in two varieties. Explosive shot, and round shot. Explosive is better for starting fires and doing damage to metered occupants like the Captain of other ships. Round shot is better for punching holes in the sides of ships or tearing through masts and sails. I recommend trying both at times to see which suits your style of sailing combat better.

Aiming the guns is a tricky skill to master. Most use one of two common approaches. The view over the cannon method, or the Minimap method:

- 1) The view method involves moving your camera view over one of the barrels of your canon and leading the target slightly in the direction of travel and then firing by pressing either a button on your canon HUD or, clicking on the canon itself.
- 2) The minimap method is watching to see where your dot and your ship are in relation to the enemy on your minimap and calculating the angle and range of your fire from that perspective.

Most canon HUDs also have a "Broadside" button. This fires all of your canon on one side of your ship at the same time. That is handy, but comes at a price of time to reload. Your canon take less time to reload if you fire them one by one. Canon can usually be adjusted left and right, and up and down by using your canon HUD. The range of motion is somewhat limited.

Try NOT to stop your ship while in a battle. This will make you a proverbial sitting duck, literally. Try to sail in such a way as to avoid being predictable. If your opponent can guess or calculate where you will be in 3-5 seconds, they can and most likely will fire several shots into your ship successfully.

When the structural level on your ship reaches 2, your ship will no longer be able to sail. It is now incapacitated. In organized battles the Rule of Engagement may require that you announce INCAP as a result. When the structural value of your ship reaches 0, it sinks. Most Rules of Engagement for organized battles require you to say DOWN in the battle chat. Be a

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good sport; do not get upset when you lose a battle. If you get frustrated or angry, take a break from it for a moment, or longer as needed. ONE of my personal favorite things about Pirate communities is that we can slug it out on the water all day, but yet, still be friends at the end of the day. Holding a grudge against a fellow sailor is poor form and can lead to dire consequences, not to mention is bad for your health.

## Chapter 7: Epilogue

I have pretty well covered the basics, now it is up to you. The more you practice the better you will become at sailing and at ship to ship combat. Ask questions, participate in events, have fun with your ship. Even the best of ships will not make you a better Captain. Be kind. Be skilled. Be Well. Most of all, have FUN!

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## AN old Irish proverb

May the wind always fill your sails, may the sun be at your back, and may you be a long time in Heaven fore the Devil know's yer gone.

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Shadow Leratia of Pirates' Destiny  
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