



DOCK LINE SETUP CHEAT SHEET

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE BY DOCK TYPE

The Essential Lines:

- **Bow Line:** Keeps the front of the boat close to the dock.
- **Stern Line:** Keeps the rear of the boat close to the dock.
- **Spring Lines:** Prevents the boat from moving forward and backward. (Forward Spring and Aft Spring).

1. Floating Docks

Floating docks move up and down with the tide, keeping your boat at a constant level relative to the dock. This makes tying up much easier.

Line	Setup Instructions
Bow & Stern Lines	Run straight across to the dock cleats. They can be tied relatively tight since the boat and dock move together.
Spring Lines	Use at least one forward and one aft spring line, crossed to prevent surging. Keep them snug.

2. Fixed Docks

Fixed docks do not move with the tide, meaning your boat will rise and fall while the dock stays still. **You must account for tidal changes.**

Line	Setup Instructions
Bow & Stern Lines	Must be left slack to allow the boat to rise and fall with the tide. Do not tie tightly.
Spring Lines	Crucial for fixed docks. Run them as long as possible (from bow to mid-dock, stern to mid-dock) to allow vertical movement without snapping.

3. Slips (4-Point Tie)

When pulling into a slip with pilings on both sides, you'll need a spiderweb-like setup to keep the boat centered and away from the edges.

Line	Setup Instructions
Bow Lines (x2)	Run one from the port bow and one from the starboard bow to the forward pilings/cleats.
Stern Lines (x2)	Run one from the port stern and one from the starboard stern. Crossing the stern lines (port stern to starboard piling, etc.) helps center the boat better in tight slips.
Spring Lines	Run forward and aft spring lines on at least one side (preferably both if anticipating heavy weather).

Pro-Tips for All Setups

- **The Cleat Hitch:** Always secure your lines to the dock using a proper cleat hitch. Wrap fully around the base once, form a figure-eight over the horns, and finish with a half-hitch lock (the line running under itself).
- **Chafe Protection:** Check where lines rub against the boat or dock edge. Use chafe guards (or sections of old hose) to protect your American Rope lines from wear.
- **Fenders First:** Always deploy fenders before approaching the dock. Adjust their height based on whether you are at a floating or fixed dock.
- **Coil Your Excess:** Neatly coil the bitter end of your lines on the dock or boat deck to prevent tripping hazards.

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