

# Tech Tips #14- Jack Stands

*by Bill Whitney*

Have you ever been doing something, something that you have been doing for years, something that's so common that you never thought much about it? Putting the boat up for the winter is sort of like that for me. After 30 or 40 years of boat ownership, everything is almost automatic. There will be exceptions now and then, depending on the changes that were made over the season, but nothing that alters the basic process. Empty the boat, fog the engine, top up the fuel, haul her, set up the blocks and stands, and toss on the cover. What could be simpler?

But I'm cursed! Nothing is ever simple! I always get myself in trouble by wanting to know too much. Don't ask me why I started thinking about blocking and boat stands. The boat has not fallen over, ever! Since the yard always hauls the boat and sets her up on the blocks and places the stands along her sides I never get directly involved. Nevertheless, for some strange compulsive reason I wanted to know what the specifications on boat stands were. So armed with this almost obsessive engineer's curiosity I hit the internet for some answers.

The internet is a great resource and manufacturers are more than willing to share information on their products. Distributors, such as West Marine, Jamestown Distributors and others have great links to their suppliers that are loaded with data and general information. Brownell is no exception. They have a great "Boat Stand Selection Guide" that gives you all the information you need for setting up your Friendship Sloop, lobster boat or trawler safely and securely.

One thing that did jump out at me was the recommendation to place the stands approximately 8' apart. The yard usually places them at twice that spacing. I don't think it has anything to do with the bulkhead spacing, since that's where they are usually placed but I need to speak to the foreman just to be sure! Below are several paragraphs that are directly from the selection guide.

"The correct type of boat stand (sailboat vs. motorboat) is determined by the angle between the hull and the stands center pipe. The threaded rod from the top that enters the stand's center pipe should do so at approximately a 90 degree angle to the boat's hull. For example, a motor boat with a deep vee bow would use a pair of sailboat stands at the bow, with motor boat stands at the stern.

To determine the proper Brownell Boat Stands to use, you must realize the boat stands are to stabilize your boat and the keel blocking supports the boat's weight. A simple method would be to take the draft in inches, add the height of the blocking, and subtract about six inches. Base your decision on keeping a minimum amount of thread exposed on the top.

A minimum of four boat stands should be used with powerboats and a minimum of five boat stands should be used with sailboats. One exception: a full keel sailboat may not require a bow stand. Use a pair of boat stands, one placed port and one placed starboard, for approximately each 8 feet of the boat's length. If you are going to be stored in an extremely windy area or leaving a sailboat mast stepped, extra boat stands should be used in addition to our minimum requirements."

If you, or the yard where you store the boat, are not conforming to these recommendations perhaps you need to think about what your insurance company may say if (God forbid) there is an accident. In retrospect, I'm glad my curiosity lead me to the Brownell site. This old dog learned a new trick.