

Suggestions for use of the Starpath University package

Several people who have purchased the [Starpath University package](#) have told us they are new to navigation, or they are refreshing after some time off. They know they need to eventually learn all of the subjects Starpath offers, and hence their choice to take advantage of the special pricing when buying it all at once.

But this is a vast amount of material, so the question comes up quickly: How do I best get started with this? These notes are designed to help answer that, but you are welcome to [contact the school](#) if more information is needed.

The package includes complete courses on celestial navigation, inland and coastal navigation, marine weather, radar, nautical charting, and the Navigation Rules. In addition to that, the special includes our new Bowditch Plus DVD, which is a complete navigator's reference library of over 114 volumes in ebook format.

Let's start with the case of brand new to boating—just bought a boat or planning to, or planning to start bareboat chartering.

In this case, the most immediate benefit will come from working through the **Inland and Coastal Navigation course** first. The course itself can be worked beginning to end, or you can skip around to choose subjects of interest, such as charts, compass use, rules of the road, tides and currents, position fixes, etc. These are more or less independent subjects covered in their own chapters, which could be studied out of order. (In contrast, the celestial navigation course must be worked front to back, each new section builds on the previous ones.)

After installing and starting the coastal nav course, more or less at the same time you can install the **Chart Trainer program**, as it is a good supplement to the beginning of the course. It includes videos on how to use the plotting tools, and extensive notes on chart symbols and chart navigation in general.

There is a section in the course on the Navigation Rules. It covers the basic ones with some limited discussion. If you wish to learn more of the Rules, then install the **Nav Rules Plus program** and start reading through the discussions of each rule included there. That program also has an Examiner module, so you can practice answering questions on the Rules till you are confident you know them. Remember, the Navigation Rules is the most important book in navigation. Know the Rules well and you are likely to avoid trouble, not just with other vessels, but with land as well.

If you have radar on your boat or plan to add it, then after these above basics are underway, is the time to install the **Radar Trainer program** and work through the tutorials included there. We would also recommend purchasing a copy of our book *Radar for Mariners* (see supplements option at the end here) as it is an excellent supplement to the software simulator and tutorial. In fact, we would recommend skimming through that book before starting work on the Radar Trainer. If you do not have radar or do not plan

on it for now, then you can for now set aside the Radar Trainer, but we would still recommend reading the book on radar as it will show what a powerful resource radar is. In the end, even more useful than GPS.

At this stage it depends a bit on what you are doing now or what time of year it is. If you are boating right now, then the **Marine Weather Trainer** would be the next on the list, as it will add to your immediate safety and efficiency on the water. Eventually this has to be covered, regardless of waters planned. If you do not plan on ocean sailing, then you can set aside the Celestial Navigation course, but even on inland waters you need the weather from the Weather Trainer.

If you are going off shore and the other materials are well underway or completed, then it might be time to start the **Celestial Navigation Course**. This course teaches how to find position at sea and other aspects of ocean navigation, but it will not be of use for coastal or inland sailing.

Hopefully those notes help, even if you are not brand new to boating.

If you are already an experienced boater but have not been offshore much, but you plan to shortly, then chances are the main new topics you are interested in are Celestial Navigation and Marine Weather. So start these (depending on the season, as mentioned above) and then use the other materials to refresh your knowledge in those other areas of the University package as questions might arise... which they for sure will. This knowledge is all interrelated, so some question or side note will come up in one course that leads you to another. That is indeed a virtue of owning the Starpath University package, you have the full line of resources at hand, as needed.

For all applications and approaches to our study materials, please remember the very powerful resource you have in our online discussion groups. Each of the products in the University package has a serial number and each of these numbers adds valuable online access time to our resources and discussion groups. Just register once to get a user name and password, then come back any time to look up topics you have a question on by searching our discussions or posting a question of your own. You can post on any topic, on any level, for any waterway, worldwide. If we cannot answer immediately, we will track down the answer for you. The University package includes in total several years of online access.

Note that the two courses require some form of plotting tools. These are discussed on the tools page of our Accessories catalog. If starting from scratch, the [Navigator's Took Pak](#) is a good option.

A way to extend the special

Several customers of the University package have asked for an extension to include the printed copies of the course materials—the package special includes the CD versions of the courses, but not the printed versions. To meet this request, we offer to those who have purchased the University package the opportunity to purchase the complete printed

course packages at their production costs of \$30 each. If you choose this option, the overall package saving increases from \$300 to \$440, since you are then getting the full combo courses (a total of \$200 more than the CD courses alone) for just an additional \$60—it does increase the shipping some, however, since it adds about 9 pounds to the shipping. You can also purchase just one of these if you like.

Add printed Cel Nav course materials to University package ([Item 1820su, \\$30](#))

Add printed Coastal Nav course materials to University package ([Item 1822su, \\$30](#))

Online courses

Starpath offers complete online courses in several subjects. The main part of the fee for those courses are the required materials, which you already have with the University package. Thus at modest tuition fees (\$49 to \$69) you can take complete courses with quizzes at the end of each lesson and supplemental content. With or without the online courses, however, you have contact with an instructor and can post questions. The main thing the online courses offer is more structure to the training and quizzes at the end of each lesson. [Look over online course options.](#)

Thank you for considering the Starpath University package. It represents some 30 years of our work and we are proud and pleased to share it with you.

David Burch
Director
Starpath School of Navigation

If the University package covers more than you need at the moment, we do have another package special called the [Training Pak](#)—a combination of Radar Trainer, Weather Trainer and Chart Trainer that we originally grouped this way for the US Naval Academy's sailing program.