



## Cruiser's Corner - Raising the Mast

By Stuart Weist, National Cruising Captain

Do you dream of Cruising? Are you new to the sport of sailing? Do you have years of experience on the water? Would you like to share your years of wisdom with others? Well, welcome to the Cruiser's Corner. This is what I hope will become a new regular feature in each edition of the *MainBrace*. I hope this will be a place to share ideas, ask questions, or share wisdom gained from years of experience.

First a little about myself. My name is Stuart Weist and I currently serve as the Cruising Captain for the Catalina 22 National Sailing Association. I have spent many years sailing and working on the water. Growing up in Southern California I learned to sail at a youth camp on Catalina Island when I was 12 or 13 and was immediately hooked. I returned from camp and within a month or so purchased my first boat (a Cal 21). This started my adventures in sailing. By the time I was 16 I was already living aboard a 31-foot motor sailor and working odd jobs to learn the maritime trade.

Over the course of my life, I have worked as a mechanic, a yard tech, a deckhand, and on various maintenance crews. The largest vessel I have ever piloted was 135 feet long and 5 stories tall. All this experience and sea time allowed me to obtain my 100T Masters Mariners License with both a sailing and towing endorsements. However, right as I was getting my license life changed and I moved shore side for a better career opportunity and never picked up my ticket from the USCG (wonder how many years they hold those J).

Over the years my own boats have changed and varied in size from dinghies to full cabin cruisers to beach cats but the Catalina 22 has always had a special place in my heart. Still all those years do not do anyone any good if I do not share them. Trust me, there have been many a mistake along the way (like almost hitting a utility line when raising a mast or hitting a tree with the mast at a ramp and almost knocking the boat off the trailer). I am sure I am not alone in my experiences and that many have questions like I did as they are starting out.

So, I thought we would carve out a little Cruiser's Corner here in the *MainBrace* to help answer some of those questions. The internet is great but sometimes all the differing opinions can be confusing, and often bad information makes its rounds. So here is a place we can ask real questions of real sailors and get real answers from those who have been there and done that. So, if you have a question or want to share a lesson learned please email me at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com). If I know the answer, I will put it in the next *MainBrace* and if not, hopefully, I can find someone who does know, and we can learn together.

So, bring your questions on anchoring, sailing, dinghies, electronics, creature comforts, safety, or your favorite "Sea Story" to share. Let's build a fun little community of sailors who can encourage one another and help pass along great information to help those just starting out. I will kick things off with one of the most frequently asked questions I see online and in various forums. Mast raising!

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Raising the mast on a Catalina 22 your first time can be daunting. Its long, heavy, and if you have never done it before a lot can go wrong in a hurry. Forums and Facebook are filled with stories of those who have damaged their boat, mast, or themselves trying to get the thing in the air. Yet with a little advanced planning you will find that raising the mast is not only doable but that it can be a fun part of the day. There is something impressive about putting up a mast single-handed while the “spectators” at the ramp watch the show. However, there are a few steps one must take to do it safely.

1. Check for overhead obstacles. Trees, wires, and even the eaves of a house can all be potential obstacles to raising the mast. You may think well, yeah, this is easy but hold on. If it were simple, then masts would not need warning stickers. When you check make sure you check not only the area, you are raising the mast but also the ramp you are using. I have put up a mast in the parking lot only to go over to the ramp and find a tree limb prevented me from launching. So, Check, check, and check again. Think out where you will be going, and what is around you.

2. Rig up a safety line! Make sure you have a way to stop the raising process at any point in case something goes wrong. A cable or line can easily get snagged requiring you to stop part way up. The internet and even the Tech Manual is filled with options from a frames and winches to block and tackle setups. Whatever you decide to use make sure you use it and have a safety line. If you start raising and something gets snagged, you will have a hard time getting the mast back down safely.



3. Check your rigging. Check all your stays, lines, halyards, straps, etc. to make sure they will not snag. On a Catalina 22 the turnbuckles are common snag points for the side stays (shrouds). Pro Tip: use a small piece of line tied through the lower toggle to prohibit it from falling to the side and preventing the turnbuckle from rotating properly (thanks Don Boyko for that one).

4. Visualize the lift. Once you have the cables, stays, lines, etc. in place, you have checked for overhead obstructions, and your safety line is in place, STOP! Stop, and visualize the lift, run through the whole process, the weight, the exit plan in case you need to bail, where any assistants might be, and what their role may be. Make sure everyone involved has the same mental plan that you do before you lift. There is nothing worse than the confusion that comes from a crisis halfway up.



5. Lift smoothly and fully. Complete the lift if you can in one smooth movement. This may mean you need to stand on the cabin top to make the lift easier. It may mean you have to have help lifting. No matter what your plan is make sure the mast is lifted smoothly and fully before you start to relax. I have been there and watched a mast come back down when someone let go about 3/4 of the way up when they thought someone else had it and let me tell you it is a scary thing.

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6. Secure at least one cable and your safety backup. On a Catalina 22 you have two forward lowers and one forestay that all need to be connected before sailing. Any one of those will hold the mast up while you secure the others. For safety I prefer to have my safety line tight as well just in case of unexpected failure. Case in point: three years ago I was raising my mast, had the two forward lowers attached (Sloppy loose) and was attaching my forestay with a furler and bam! The entire turn buckle shot apart from the furler pulling all the threads clean out and causing quite the scare. Needless to say, I do not miss the old furler at all and much prefer the regular cable stay now. I have always thought if one line will do, then two is better.



That is it, your mast is up you so now you just have to tune (tighten) the turnbuckles and you are off to the rest of the rigging for the day (boom, sails, BBQ, fenders, etc....). Pro Tip: Clothes pins work great to hold up your shroud covers.

Hopefully, these tried-and-true steps will help you have a safe and successful mast raising at the ramp. As you get better the steps get easier and faster. On my boat I use my boom-vang as a block and tackle attached to my jib halyard, raise the mast crutch in the stern to give me a head start, set the cables on the teak cabin rails, stand on the cabin top, and lift away. Once fully up, I tighten the boom-vang line and lock it off to the cleat on the block. I then attach the stays and I am off to the races. Total time of mast from trailer to standing up ready for boom and sails is usually ten minutes or so. But this is cruising, so who cares how long it takes. Just make sure it is fun and not too much of a burden.

I learned a long time ago if you do not have a good system for getting the mast up, you will use the boat a lot less. Marinas are filled with small trailer sailors that sit dockside costing the owners thousands, all because they dread the mast raising. Yet with a little advanced planning and a good system raising the mast (even alone) does not have to be a chore at all.

So what do you do to raise you mast? What questions might you have about sailing, cruising, or getting started in sailing. What adventure would you like to share? Email me and let us get this Cruiser's Corner going and start building a community of sailors who are living the dream and not dreaming about living.

Until next time,

Stuart Weist

For those more visual learners: <https://youtu.be/iwfl2wKROfE>





## Cruiser's Corner: Pack Some Fun

By: Stuart Weist

Winter is on its way and the cruising season is coming to an end. I know it makes me sad too, but hey that just means it's time to start thinking about the next adventure. As cruisers we know that half the fun is getting there but we also know that when we get there, we want to have fun as well. That's why I wanted to remind you all to pack some fun!

It's easy to overpack cloths, water, and sometimes even food to the point there is no room for ice in the ice chest, but when you're deciding where to cut and what to leave home don't leave out the fun. Sometimes you need that ridiculous item to just put a smile on your face. I can remember one trip to the Apostle Islands where my youngest son wanted to bring along an inflatable turtle. Not some small toy- it was a 4-foot-wide pool float with a head and feet. The thing was so big we had to tow it behind the boat in the dingy. Mr. Turtle as it became known was a real pain to deal with and he was hardly played with, but that silly inflatable led to many smiles for the family.

Other items that just make the cruise better for me are camping chairs to stay out of the sand when you get to shore. Fire starters are also nice for an evening campfire on the beach. My family even brings along a beach umbrella to have shade on the boat. I have found that the upper half of a standard beach umbrella fits perfectly in the winch handle hole on the cockpit. This is a game changer and works pretty well on a hot, sunny day. It can even be used on the beach if needed!

Cruising is all about having fun and enjoying the trip so don't forget to pack some fun. Astronaut ice cream, chocolate, or your favorite treat are always a way to brighten up a disappointing day. Make sure to have a game or two along you can play in the cabin for when it rains. If you're cruising with young kids, go swimming in the rain! You are wet anyway and they won't die of hypothermia too quickly. What you will find is that as you relax you will enjoy the whole experience more. So, this winter take stock of the trips you have had, think about what would have made them more fun, and make an updated list. That way when spring comes around and it's time to hit the water once again, you will remember to pack some fun for another season on the water. Fair winds my fellow sailors and happy hibernation.

As always if you have any questions or want to contribute to the cruisers corner don't hesitate to contact me at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com) and I hope to see you on the water this year.

# Cruiser's Corner - Trailers



**By Stuart Weist**  
**National Cruising Captain**

Happy New Year my fellow cruisers! Hopefully, you are already dreaming about all the adventures you plan to have in this coming year. Our nation is filled with pristine lakes, beautiful shores, and amazing reefs just waiting to be explored in your Catalina 22. However, as you make your plans for this coming cruising year don't forget to maintain your trailer. While we spend countless hours varnishing, painting, sanding, and polishing our prized little boats the trailer is often forgotten. However, nothing can derail that perfect trip faster than being broken down on the side of the road waiting for parts or with an expensive tow bill. That is why this article of Cruiser's Corner is devoted to that least appreciated piece of equipment, your trailer.

Trailers are simple devices which is why they are so often forgotten. After all for most Catalinas your trailer consists of a single axel, a couple lights, and a hitch connection. There is not that much to break so we often do not look to fix it until it is broken. The problem is that when things go bad, they can go bad really fast. I have seen trailer tires pass the tow vehicle, pictures of boats overturned in a ditch, or blowouts that tear fenders off and damage that fiberglass hull you spent all that time cleaning. This coupled with the responsibility you bear as the captain for the safety of those on the road with you ought to be enough to give you pause to look at that trailer each spring. In this article I am not going to tell you how to do all the necessary maintenance (the Tech Manual can do that). My goal is just to help you know what to look for as you prepare for that epic adventure this year. So, let's work our way in order from bow to stern and look at your faithful trailer.

## Tongue

The trailer tongue must be securely locked to the ball on the towing vehicle. This requires periodic lubrication of the latch with some WD 40 (a little goes a long way). If your trailer has brakes you should check the brakes reservoir and top it up, if necessary, while also checking for leaks in the brake system. Also on the tongue is the single most important part of your entire towing system **SAFETY CHAINS!** Never, and I mean never, move your trailer without the chains attached. If the ball fails, your trailer will head off without you. Be it into the lake, oncoming traffic, or down the street into the neighbor's garage. Make sure your chains are always connected and are of the proper size. The proper procedure is to make an "X" pattern under the tongue to catch the trailer should the hitch fail. Finally, on the tongue you will want to double-check the ball size. I tow a lot of different trailers throughout a year and my boat trailer requires a two-inch ball. So, if I have swapped to the 1-7/8 ball or the 2-1/4 inch ball will need to change it out for the proper size.



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## Frame

Check your trailer frame for signs of cracking, rust, or other deterioration. If you have a steel trailer like I do take a wire wheel and clean up the rust spots before applying Rustoleum to them every year (don't do this on a windy day). This is a quick easy fix to make sure you won't have frame failure down the road. This is also



a good time to check your extension, if you have one, to make sure it moves freely while also checking that your fenders are not rubbing on the tires.

## Axle

Here is the largest point of maintenance on your entire rig. Start by making sure your tires are in great shape. A fully loaded Catalina 22 with all the cruising gear, fuel, and water will weigh in around 4,000 pounds (verified on a scale with our family's gear for a week). This is at the max load for your typical C load rated trailer tires. So, make sure they are in great shape as trailer tires are only intended to last about five years regardless of mileage. I found this out the hard way when I tried to get in one more year out of my tires and lost one in spectacular fashion on the highway. Trailer tires tend to separate between the tread not the side-wall so take a very close look for any separations. Also, note that a spare tire jack from your tow vehicle



will likely not be able to lift the trailer to change the tire. I have a Ford F-150, and the small factory jack will not get tall enough nor be able to lift my fully loaded trailer. So, carry a jack that is up to the job for those longer trips. Also, check your rims for any bent edges (from when your friend backed it in last year) and that the lug nuts are tight. Don't use an impact tool or you may not get them off on the roadside in an emergency when tightening the rims. But enough about tires there is more in the center of the trailer to maintain.

Don't forget the bearings! Those pesky things should be checked and packed once a year if you travel a lot or at least every other year if everything sounds fine. We average about 5,000 miles per year on our trailer and I try to do them every year. When I go two years, I check the bearing temperature often while on longer trips and have always noticed that they run a lot warmer the second year. When it is time to repack the bearings, also replace the grease seals on the hubs. They are cheap and will keep that grease in the bearing where it belongs and the water out where it belongs. Also, if you use bearing buddies like I do, after a few years the seals tend to go due to the constant positive pressure on the bearing housing from the extra grease pressure. While you are checking bearings also check the spindles to make sure they are clean and free of any pitting. This will give you the best running surface for those bearings.

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If your trailer has brakes this is the time to service those as well. Shoes should be adjusted to just contact the drums as you roll, and depending on your system may need adjustment during your sailing season. I use a paint marker on the back side of the hub near the leaf springs to remind me which way to adjust the brakes to tighten them. Oh, and while you're tightening the brakes look at those leaf springs. They should be clean and free of major rust or cracking. If they are deformed, cracked, or missing retainer clips, then order up a set of replacement ones and swap them out. I generally replace them as a matched set even if only one side looks bad.

Finally on your axle check the U-hanger bolts. If you have a drop axel often the extra threads on the hanger bolts hang toward the road. This means if you come off a curb after that quick gas stop you can bend or even break the bolts. Only two years ago I had to replace all of mine as they were in horrible shape, and one was even broken. That could have been not only a trip-ending disaster, but a total loss of the entire boat had the axel broken free of its mounts.

## Taillights

Once you finish all that axle maintenance you might be thinking how much more is there? Well good news you are almost there! At the stern of the trailer, you will find your lights. Check these for cracked lenses or bulbs that no longer work. Make sure the plug on the vehicle end is good and that all lights function. As I understand the DOT rules you can have all the lights you want on the trailer (side lights, marker lights, taillights, etc.) but whatever you have must function properly. Most states require tail-lights at a minimum and I find side marker lights very helpful for those late-night towing sessions. When it comes to trailer wiring, I took a page right out of Don Boyko's book and ran an independent ground on each side of the trailer. This way I am not depending on the trailer frame for the ground on my lights as often rust in the mounting bolts would cause me to lose connection. Once you make sure the lights work and all is good, then go ahead and straighten that bent license plate (if you have one) and hit the road!

While your trailer is indeed a simple machine as you can see there is quite a bit to check each spring. However, do not let the maintenance overwhelm you as after the first time you will find a maintenance plan that works for you. By following a simple maintenance check every year you hopefully will have many years of successful trailering where you not only arrive safely but return home safely as well. So now is the time to go wade through the snow and start looking at that trailer for the parts you will want to have on hand for spring so that you are ready for that early ice out we all pray for this year! Hopefully, we will see you on the road and on the water this year. As always, if you have any questions or want to contribute to the cruisers corner don't hesitate to contact me at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com) and we will see you on the water this year.

# Cruiser's Corner-Outboard Maintenance



By Stuart Weist, National Cruising Captain

So last time we spoke about the challenges and joys of raising your mast before heading out on the cruise you have been planning all year. This time it's time to talk about the dark side! Yup, you guessed it, this cruisers corner is devoted to that cast iron mainsail which hangs off the back of the boat, your motor. Whether we like to admit it or not, the key to a successful cruise is a good working outboard that starts reliably and gets you off the dock or to safety in a storm. I have decided many times to start the motor to make the needed miles for a day, run from an incoming storm, or just to get back a little faster with the sails up when the family is getting tired of the day on the water.

If like me, you started off sailing a smaller dinghy or a Hobie Cat, a motor was a luxury you not only didn't have, but did not want or need. It was just an unnecessary expense. However, while a Catalina 22 is not a large yacht by any stretch of the imagination it is a bit larger than a dingy as well. A Catalina 22 does not paddle well (though it can be done in a pinch) as it weighs over 2500 pounds when loaded for a cruise (over 3500 for the newer designs with a wing keel and a family of 5 on board). Having all this weight means the boat is more stable but also that you will need an auxiliary motor at some point. By now I am sure everyone has seen the demise of the Catalina Capri 22 (race boat) which failed to install and start their outboard in a timely fashion before the boat wrecked into a pier and then a beach. In case you haven't seen the video you can watch it here and yes everyone made it to shore safely but the boat was a total loss. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdYTGre3fAA>

Knowing then than a good outboard ought to be part of the essential cruising equipment list, how do we know if our motor will be reliable? Regular maintenance! Depending on whether you have the popular Sailpro outboard, Lehr Propane motor, or Torqueedo electric motor (or any other motor for that matter), all of them will require regular maintenance and inspection. I won't go into the specifics of maintenance in this article as there are plenty of those resources in the *Catalina 22 Technical Manual*. However, there are a few basics that a sailor ought to know.

For gas powered motors you'll want to keep the impellor, fuel lines, carburetor, and spark plugs on your regular maintenance check list. Each of these maintenance items should be changed based on your hours of use or years since last service. Personally, I run the motor a fair bit (though nothing compared to a fishing boat) so I change my impellor every other year. I typically get about 3 years out of a set of plugs and use an engine tune chemical in the carburetor each Fall to decarbonize the cylinder heads. Additionally every 2 to 3 years I'll remove the carb and float bowl so that they can be cleaned thoroughly with some carb cleaner. I inspect all the fuel lines and replace them once they become stiff (this is a sign the rubber is degrading) and replace the fuel filter every other year. Typically, I will run less than 6 gallons of gas through the motor during my cruising year. However, I still run the motor dry at the ramp before removing the boat to make sure there is no fuel left in the carb and use a fuel stabilizer in the best fuel I can find or afford.

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I know this may sound like a lot of maintenance, but I used to work for Johnson Evinrude for a time and these are the same things we would do when you brought a motor to the shop. Following this guideline motors would typically run for decades and continue to perform reliably. Every wonder why that hard starting old 1980s motor come back from the shop and starts on the first pull? Good clean plugs, clean carb, and working impeller to keep the motor cool, that's how. It's amazing how a little maintenance can save days of frustration later, or worse yet, end a great cruise before it begins. If you are new to sailing or motors, there are countless articles online and in the Tech manual which will walk you through these maintenance items. Really, it's just an afternoon's work in the spring and fall to winterize and then have your motor running well for the year.

Now if you're the sailor who has gone with an alternative fuel like propane or diesel (yes, there are small European diesel outboards) you'll have a slightly different maintenance routine. Seals for LPG bottles, fuel filters, and injector cleanings may be on your list as well. If you're the type who chose electric propulsion, then it's battery maintenance and cleaning things off. You'll want to run the motor and take note of vibrations which could indicate a bearing going bad, arcing of any electrical components, and overall condition of your batteries for power. Personally, I like the idea and simplicity of an electric motor for getting to and from a dock but not for cruising. There are too many variables and if I need to motor for 10 hours, I don't want to think about whether my battery will make it or not as I know I'll find a gas station somewhere I can walk to. However, sailors are an eclectic bunch, and we all make decisions based on what works best for us.

So, fellow cruisers, what I am trying to say is this—that little motor on the back of the boat is your best friend in a time of need. It provides propulsion when the wind dies, helps you maneuver in tight spaces, and even generates power for your house battery if equipped with a charging unit. It's like a small little insurance policy for your next cruise. However, it's a policy that you want in good standing through proper maintenance and inspection so that when you find yourself in need you don't find your policy canceled.

So, what kind of maintenance routine do you use and how often do you replace things? What other essential cruising equipment do you have on your boat? Or what would you add to my thoughts here? Cruiser's corner is a place to exchange ideas, tips, tricks, and great advice for sailors so if you have something to share or a suggestion for a future article, please let me know at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com).

Until next time fellow sailors, keep the mast up and the shiny side down! We will see you on the water.

Stuart Weist  
Cruising Captain  
Catalina 22 National Sailing Association



## Cruiser's Corner - Anchoring

By Stuart Weist, National Cruising Captain

Welcome back to another wonderful chat at the Cruiser's Corner. This quarter I want to take on one of the most controversial topics among sailors. No, not a renaming ceremony or mast raising technique. Let's talk Anchoring! I have been sailing well over 20 years and it seems every sailor has their own technique for anchoring. This quarter I thought I would share mine for the Catalina 22.

Anchoring is often one of the most overlooked skills of any sailor. We have all seen the videos of small boats wrecked because of a motor or sail failure in the surf. But most of the time if the skipper had a sound anchoring plan those accidents could have been avoided. Anchoring is a skill you ought to practice and practice often, for it is the only brake your boat has. So, when we talk anchors, we should start with equipment.

Your anchor type should be based upon the type of anchorages you plan to use. If you're anchoring in large rocks (no mud or sand bottom just large shale cliffs) then you'll need a grappling or large-weighted mushroom-type anchor. The only time I have run into this is when anchoring on the large rocks in the Apostles. For that, weight is your friend. However, most of the time a good Danforth anchor will serve your boat just fine.



The Danforth anchor has flukes which penetrate sand and mud relatively well and provide an excellent holding strength to weight ratio. As always everything is a tradeoff and hauling a heavy 50 pound anchor on a 22-foot boat is just not practical. Now I know that there are those on the gulf coast that prefer a plow anchor due to the shifting sand and large tidal swings but for me traveling around anchoring in lakes, rivers, and sandy bays nothing beats a Danforth for all around use.

Once you have the anchor type figured out next comes the rode (line) choice. I grew up sailing on the ocean where the old sailor's rule of thumb was that you wanted a boat length of chain minimum for your anchor. Some say that is overkill, but I sleep pretty well on a 22-foot boat with 22 feet of chain holding the hook to the sand. Chain serves a dual purpose on your boat. First, it provides a little weight and second it holds down the anchor shank so that the anchor (hook) easily sets and resets with shifting tides and currents. Not having enough chain usually means having an anchor that often drags on the bottom in changing conditions. This can lead to a lack of confidence in your anchor and a restless night of sleep.

Once you have the chain length you need and are comfortable, next comes your rode. This is the rope that attaches to the chain and ties to the boat. How much line you need depends on how deep you want to anchor in. To figure out how much line you need start by taking the water depth and multiplying that times five (if light conditions are expected) or 7 (if moderate winds or a large shift in wind direction is expected). You will also need to account for the tides in your area and adjust accordingly throughout the day.

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While on the west coast a large tide is only six feet some east coast anchorages can swing 7-10 feet or more in small bays. Make sure you know the tides and weather forecast for the area you plan to anchor in.



Once you know how much line and chain you need you then must develop a system that works for you. All anchors are only as good as their set in the bottom. So, start by bringing the boat to a full stop and allowing it to drift backwards in the wind (or motor in reverse if no wind). Once you're moving back slowly then pay out the anchor, chain, and line to the recommended depth. Once enough line is out hold tight or tie off the line to set the anchor. Do not just toss it over like you see in the movies. All you'll have is a pile of chain and line on the bottom likely wrapped around your anchor. In a perfect world your anchor line should be straight from the front of the boat to the anchor with the anchor firmly set.

Once the anchor is set, if you're spending the night, I recommend backing down with the outboard to firmly set the anchor. I don't like it moving when I am anchored in 5 feet of water on a river with a close shore nearby. Once set, I sit in the cockpit for 30 minutes to an hour reading a book or putting the boat away watching the shore. You want to make sure that nothing is dragging or moving you close to danger. If in doubt, then pull the hook and set it again. No one wants to wake up at 2 A.M. because you anchor has drug and the boat is drifting away. Once you're sure that you're all set then enjoy the day, swim, explore, fish, or just relax. Knowing how to anchor means knowing how to stop the boat. Even if there is an emergency you can always toss the hook and stop the boat until you get things sorted out. In fact, using an anchor is even a technique legal in racing. You can't use the anchor to pull yourself forward but, in a river (like the Mississippi where I race) the current will pull you back in no or low wind situations. Being able to quickly deploy the anchor while you wait for wind means holding your place in the race.

So, practice your anchoring, watch some YouTube videos, read some anchor test sheets online. Whatever you do, make sure you have a plan in place to anchor if you need to. So, what is your anchoring technique? How much chain do you carry? Where's your favorite place to set the hook? Cruiser's corner is here to discuss ideas and share information. If you have a unique anchoring system or a solid plan that works for you shoot me an email at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com). You may even see that technique discussed here in a future Cruiser's Corner. Until next time fair winds fellow sailors!

# Cruiser's Corner: Knowing How to Sail

By Stuart Weist, National Cruising Captain



Winter is well underway here in Minnesota and I do not know if it is the cold or cabin fever, but it was time for a confession. I have been sailing since I was a child, lived on board for almost 11 years, and worked commercially in the maritime industry. I had passed my USCG exams with sea time for my 100T Master Mariners license with both sailing and towing endorsements. On paper my sailing and sea time resume looks great, but truth be told when it came to sailing, I did not fully know what I was doing.

You see it is easy to make a sailboat move. Pull on a line or two, turn the tiller this way or that way and so forth. But while this rudimentary method will make your boat move through the water, there is so much more to know about doing it efficiently. I used to think that a large boat with the rail in the water was fast and felt cool! Little did I know that not only was it uncomfortable, but slow as all get up. It was not until I started racing my little Catalina 22 that I learned the value of sail trim and understanding what makes the boat go. In light of this confession, I wanted to devote this cruisers corner into helping others understand why knowing how to sail is so important.

Many cruisers love to be out on the water with the sun beaming down, temperatures in the 70s and that 5 to 10 mph breeze just pushing them along. Unfortunately, cruising is rarely that perfect picture. Most of the time the wind is too high, too low, it is cloudy, or rain is on the way. Knowing how to properly adjust your sails means the difference between an adventure you will enjoy and an ordeal you survived. Here are six tips to help make your next cruising adventure more comfortable.

- ◆ Keep the boat flat. Heeling is fun and looks cool for pictures but is slow and often uncomfortable for captain and crew. Let those sails out a bit and keep the boat on its feet. Your crew will thank you and your photographer might actually catch you smiling.
- ◆ Know how to reef, and trim in heavy weather. Do not be afraid of the 15 to 25mph days. Put up a smaller head sail and go for it. The Catalina 22 is a headsail driven boat so removing the jib will unbalance the boat adding heel and reducing speed. You're actually better off sailing with just a jib than just a main in most instances. As for reefing the saying is, "reef early and reef often." I have always been one to push the limits, but my crew is not always excited about that.
- ◆ Know your limits! While heavy wind can be fun there comes a point where the fun is lost, and the crew would rather be at anchorage for the night. I have many a times motored from one anchorage to another to outrun weather or for the comfort of the crew. You are a sailor, and you have nothing to prove so make your trip fun. Only the skipper remembers having fun in the storm.

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- ◆ Stop yelling sailing terms to novice sailors. Yes, sailing comes with a variety of vocabulary. After all is it a vang or a kicker, cunningham, or downhaul, etc. I know it is against tradition but calling a line a rope is not something to fear. We are not on an America's Cup yacht and most people have a very different idea when you say wrap that around the winch! Use colored lines, help describe what you want them to do, and remain calm. Far too many sailors sail alone because no one likes spending Saturday afternoon with Captain Bligh on the Bounty!
- ◆ Know how to shape your sails. Understanding the basics of draft, tension, and trim of your sails will make your boat sail faster, smoother, and reduce how often you need to reef. Join in a mid-week race at your local club, crew on another boat, watch some YouTube, read some books. However, you learn, spend some time studying this. It will make your sailing more enjoyable and smoother. It may just help you be first to the anchorage to get that perfect spot and always remember that nothing replaces time in the boat. So, you will need to practice those things you learn and keep practicing them.
- ◆ Bring shade and rain gear! Nothing is worse than baking in the hot sun with no wind or being soaked by a passing storm. Pick up a cheap beach umbrella as they fit in the winches and provide a bit of shade for captain and crew. Install a Bimini or some other canopy but have some shade on hand. At the same time invest in a good raincoat and some water shoes. A full rain suit is even better but if you cruise long enough, you will get caught in the rain and comfort can become key. It is always nice to be a bit dryer when you finally set the hook and settle in for a hot meal than to be soaked, cold, and exhausted so you settle for a cold supper.

There is much more that could be said of course but these six tips will be a great start to your sailing year. Following these tips will help you to improve not only your sailing skills but confidence on the water. Knowing how to sail better has made sailing more fun and comfortable for myself and my family. I no longer fear the large waves and small craft advisories on my little boat. Now it is just another day on the water where I generally ask myself and my crew what we can take because I know the boat will be just fine.

Until next time my fellow sailors here is to fair winds and following seas!

As always if you have any questions or want to contribute to the cruisers corner do not hesitate to contact me at [svlakeshark@gmail.com](mailto:svlakeshark@gmail.com) and I hope to see you on the water this year.



## Cruiser's Corner - Bottom Paint

By Stuart Weist, National Cruising Captain

The sun is out, and spring is in the air for the upper Midwest. While I am sure we are not completely done with snow in Minnesota, the lakes are starting to turn back into liquid and for the first time in many months the brown frozen lawns are starting to become visible once again giving hopes of warmer days to come. With the oncoming spring season also comes spring maintenance for the upcoming sailing season. Each year sailors all over the nation have different tasks on their lists that they want to accomplish before the big launch day. As I read on some of the online forums and articles from major marine vendors, each year the topic of bottom paint seems to undoubtedly come up.

While the conversations and perspectives vary in general, the discussion on bottom paint revolves around three basic questions: Do I need bottom paint? Does the type of paint matter? And how often should it be applied? In this quarter's Cruiser's Corner let's take a look at each of these questions one at a time.

**Do I need bottom paint?** Answer = Maybe.

If you leave your boat in the water year-round or have it in a slip for the sailing season you likely need bottom paint. It will prevent those pesky marine critters from making your boat their new home and slow you down out on the water. Not to mention that in salt water the muscles can be quite sharp on the feet when swimming around the boat if left unattended. However, if you're the type that dry sails, that is to say you keep your boat on a trailer most of the time, then bottom paint is far less important. Even a gel-coated boat can spend a week or two in the water with no adverse problems in most environments. Please note that I said *most* not *all* as there are always extremes and exceptions to every rule. Generally, I prefer no bottom paint unless it's needed as the type does matter and not all paints can be left on a trailer without losing their effectiveness. This invariably leads to the next question.



**Does the type of paint matter?** Answer = You betcha!

When I first started in the professional marine industry working in a local boat yard in San Diego some 20 years ago. Bottom paints were all about the same and contained some mixture of lead, zinc, and copper. They were okay but required proper PPE to apply as the wet paints could be harmful if the vapor was inhaled. The general rule of thumb back then was the thicker you could apply the paint the longer it would last. However, in today's modern marine world there are many different types of paint, and most are far more environmentally friendly than they used to be. If you have decided that bottom paint is needed on your boat, you will want to start with a proper barrier coat. A barrier coat is generally a two-part epoxy paint that seals the hull to prevent blistering and give a good adherence of your paint. From there, the type of bottom paint you choose should be based on the type of sailing and the waters you sail in.

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While paints come in many types (copper, zinc, etc.). There are two categories for these paints. One is ablative and the other a hard paint. Ablative paints are generally used in saltwater environments and are applied to boats that are cleaned monthly by a diver. The frequency of cleaning will affect the lifespan of the paint. That's because with an ablative paint a little paint rubs off each time the hull is cleaned revealing fresh paint to help further prohibit growth. Ablative paints have been around for years and in most saltwater environments seem to last a good 2 to 3 years. The downside to this paint is that it does rub off on everything. This means if you're waxing the hull in the water it will get on your cloth if you touch it. It is also not generally UV stable and loses its effectiveness on land or when exposed to a season of sunshine on the trailer. The sun will cause the paint to become chalkier, and it will get on your hands, clothes, basically everything when it's dry and on the trailer. If you have a boat with ablative paint on it and it's been out of the water all year, you'll want to wet sand with some 220 and put on a fresh coat or two for maximum protection. One final draw back to this paint, or any bottom paint, is that it can only be painted over with the same type of paint. That means if you have ablative paint on the boat and want to change to a hard paint, you'll have to strip all the paint back to the barrier coat to apply a different type or the new paint will not stick.



The other type of paint that is not ablative is a hard paint like VC-17 (a favorite among the Great Lakes sailors). These paints are two-parts and are applied over the barrier coat. Hard paints are much thinner than ablative, and you only mix as much paint as you can roll in the time allotted by the manufacturer. Being a thinner paint, they also dry fast and provide a hard finish. This is the type of paint preferred in freshwater environments where slime is more of a concern than barnacles. The upside is that if you trailer, this type of paint will not be as susceptible to UV damage and thus lasts longer. The downside to a hard paint is that it is generally applied each year before a spring launch with one or two very thin coats and burnished to a slick finish. Also, like an ablative paint a hard paint can only be overcoated by the same kind of paint. Well, that's the general rule, but not always so accurate.



My boat, "Lakeshark" used to have ablative paint on it from when it used to live on a mooring with a previous owner. However, after a few years of trailer sailing the paint was chalky and shot. Every time I pulled the rudder my hands would turn blue; it drove me nuts. So, one day I removed all the paint from the rudder, reapplied the barrier coat (there was no barrier coat applied before) and painted with VC performance epoxy. It's a hard paint but has no antifouling properties. I like it because it is white, and it has stood up well over the last 5 years or so. In fact, it stood up so well 2 years ago I started the task of stripping the entire boat hull. I found that under the ablative paint was a hard paint like VC-17. Below that there was a barrier coat. The hull had no blisters or chipping from the 2 different types of paint but then again, we generally spend less than a week in the water at a time. Once I found the hard paint, I actually stopped stripping the bottom and decided I would leave it. Now if I ever wanted to go back to the bottom point, I could just roll on a good hard paint that would stand up well on the trailer and freshwater lakes we frequent. The ablative paint should not have stuck to the hard paint but in my case, it worked just fine so yeah, there are exceptions to every rule. This, then, leads us to the final question.

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**How often should the bottom paint be reapplied?** Answer = 1 to 3 years on average.

I have already discussed the different types of paint and what causes them to need reapplication, but in general 1-3 years is about average. Ablative paints in boats sailed year-round and cleaned regularly should last about 2 years. If they are more of a dock queen and are cleaned less frequently the paint may last a bit longer but the divots form barnacles and things can be more severe. Freshwater boats only spend about six months in the water each year, and are then pulled for the winter months to prevent hull damage from ice and freezing temps. In these environments, hard paint is typically used and is not cleaned by a diver but by a recreational sail or a quick swim around the boat. No abrasive scraping is generally needed, and the paints applied are so thin, most will apply a coat at the start of each season. A quart or two of a hard paint, like VC-17, is more than enough to do a Catalina 22 with a couple coats and it takes very little prep so it's generally an easier spring task.

In the end, to paint or not to paint is one of those questions that garner many opinions based on experience, goals, and sailing type. For a Catalina 22 on a trailer, paint is not needed in my opinion. For one left in the water, you'll want some type of paint along with a barrier coat. This will help protect the hull against blisters, and marine growth from being in a slip or on a mooring ball. Hopefully this brief overview of paint types helps you make decisions that are best for you and your sailing style. At the end of the day, regardless of what paint (if any) you have on your boat, don't get lost in the maintenance rabbit hole. Make sure you get out there on the water and enjoy the boat. The wind does not care what type of paint you have on the boat, or how clean it is, and I have never heard of a family coming back from a weekend camping trip complaining about their bottom paint.

Fair winds my fellow cruisers.

## Catalina 22 Fleet 10 East Coast National Cruise

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## Cruiser's Corner - Furlers

By Stuart Weist, Cruising Captain

To furl or not to furl, that is the question? Well perhaps that is not the question Shakespeare had in mind, but it is certainly the question in the mind of many Catalina 22 cruisers. After all furlers are expensive, they require headsail modification (most of the time), and they can add an extra step in rigging at the ramp. So, this month let's take some time and look into furlers. Hopefully with a better understanding of what furlers are, how they work, and the alternative solutions. You can make a decision that works best for you.

Let's start by looking at furler types. In the world of sailing any form of rolling a headsail around the forestay qualifies as a furling system. But not all furling systems are created equal so let's take a look at the 3 most common.

### CDI Furlers:

These furling systems do more than just roll the headsail. They provide endless reefing opportunities as well. The Core of the CDI style system is the large flexible foil that goes over your forestay. Your jib halyard is no longer used and the foil itself has an internal halyard that runs independent of the jib halyard on the masthead. There is a small drum at the base which neatly holds the coil of line while the sail is in use. Like all furlers the control line is led back to the cockpit to allow quick and easy furling or reefing of the headsail. However, as good as all this sounds there are some significant drawbacks.



First the foil system requires that a luff tape be added to each headsail you plan to use with the system. You will no longer be able to use your hanks or forestay in the traditional way without removing the entire foil system. Second the system also requires a sacrificial UV protectant cloth be added to the leech and foot of the sail. This protective layer (often blue) adds weight to the sail lowering its performance and protects the sail from rotting in the sunlight. Additionally, if the boat is stored with the mast up, you'll want to make sure it's rolled well as a good storm can easily partially unfurl your sail leaving it flogging in the breeze and destroying the sail with no one around. The third and in my opinion largest drawback is the weight and inconvenience it adds to trailer sailing. There is no way around the fact that a mast is heavy, having a furler on the mast adds weight and thus makes it heavier. Additionally, when the boat is being trailered you need to decide if you're going to remove the sail or tie it securely. No one wants a good sail ruined while doing 75 MPH down the interstate.

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Still for many Cruisers a this furler is worth its weight in gold. It provides the extra hand on the deck that many need, allows for effortless reefing of the headsail (though not as efficient as changing head sails), and looks more Yacht like at the dock. I have had furling systems in the past and when they work well, they are amazing. But when they stop working well yeah let's not talk about that....

### Small Boat Furlers:

These are a class of furlers made by Harken, Ronstan, or others that are true furlers. This means that they are all in or all out. A furler of this type cannot be used for reefing. Like the CDI furler they too require headsail modification but not with a luff tape. Instead, they require a wire be stitched into the luff of the sail. The furling system consists of a drum at the bottom and a swivel at the top. They are hoisted with the jib halyard with the sail attached between the drum and the swivel. Once the sail is up many will remove the forestay entirely leaving the wire luff of the sail to be the new forestay. The sail simply rolls up in the traditional manner by turning the forestay and rolling up the sail. The benefit is that the sail can be more easily removed from the system while lowering the mast, it provides fast dousing of the headsail, and is still class legal for those that like to race. Also, these systems typically don't require the protective UV fabric on the leech and foot of the sail as they are not generally intended to be left up for months on end at the dock. When trailering, the sail is removed and stored often in a roll bag with no need to re-roll the sail. But again, there are some drawbacks.



Likely the largest drawback is the lack of reefing. You cannot reef the sail or partially deploy it without risking damaging the sail. Also, these systems can be a bit more temperamental at times and can jam more easily. While they don't add weight for raising the mast, they do add some additional rigging time running the furling line back to the cockpit and still require the modification for each headsail you want to use. What I like is that with this system you can still adjust the luff tension for racing and performance, however I wonder about the additional wear and tear on the sail as it is lowered and folded at times on its way down.

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### Old School Mariner Furlers:

These are the final types of furler we will look at in this article. These are a furler that tries to be the best of both the CDI and the Small boat style of furlers. The forestay is attached to a drum and swivel like the small boat furler, but the sails are still hanked on. The sail is simply shortened a bit in luff length and attached to the drum. The sail is raised normally using the halyard with the upper swivel sliding over the forestay. At the top of the mast the upper swivel locks into a hex which makes it rotate in sync with the forestay as the lower drum is spun. The sail furlers around the hanks and forestay. However, like the small boat furler it is an all or nothing approach to furlers. You cannot reef with this system. Still the promise of furling without needing major modification to the headsail and the ability to raise and lower the headsail easily is appealing. That being said these systems often jam and can be the source of a number of headaches. I suppose it's why the companies that made them are long out of business.

I had one of these systems on my boat and even rebuilt all the bearings on it. I even did an article about the process a few years back. However, the constant jamming, hassle tensioning the forestay for trailering, and all in or all out furling proved not to suit my needs. In fact, after towing the boat some 3 hours to a lake for a week of vacation I even had the forestay fail while rigging which resulted in me having to replace the forestay and canceling the trip. Needless to say, these systems work for some, but it did not for me and after a disappointing trip of no sailing I went back to a standard forestay. The benefit though was the since my sails were not modified, I could simply use my old sails on my now standard forestay.

### What Works For Me:

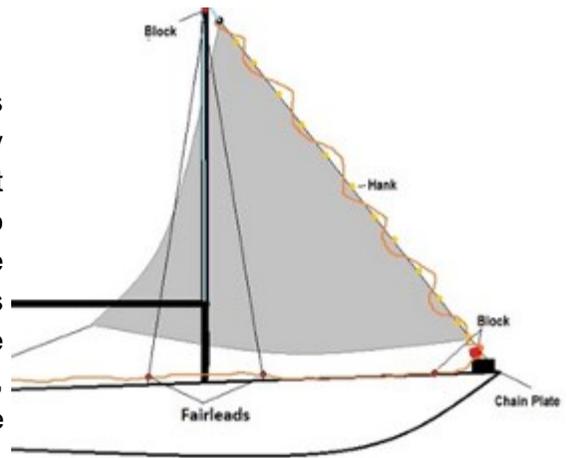
So, there you have the types of furling systems available to the C22 sailor. If you leave your mast up and want a furler the CDI system is most popular. However, if you trailer sail as I do then I actually would not recommend a furler at all. I know there appealing and look cool but having a couple different head sails that can easily be changed based on weather conditions is often best. Even reefing a sail on a CDI furler ruins the air foil shape of the sail reducing its performance more than simply changing out the headsail. This is why I actually prefer the old hank on system. It adds no complexity at the ramp, is easily tensioned, and allows for additional sails to be swapped quickly and easily. In fact, some sails from other boats can be used as well. For instance, I have a little 105 headsail from a J105 that seems to fit the boat quite well. It provides the balance I need to make upwind progress even in the largest of blows and the red / white candy stripe patter is fun to look at.



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Still the appeal of that second hand on the foredeck is strong. This is why I solved it by adding a dousing line for the hanks. I simply run a line from the cockpit to a small block by the pulpit and hoist it attached to the top hank or two of the sail. When it comes time to douse the sail simply release the jib halyard and pull on the dousing line. The sail typically comes down quickly and piles neatly on the foredeck without need of an extra hand. If you have seen any pictures of Lake Shark at the 2023 Catalina 22 Nationals, you'll see that neon green line on the forestay. Yup that's the dousing line and even with a full crew on board we sure do love it.



### Conclusion:

The question of whether to furl or not to furl comes down to the skipper's preference. If you only cruise and your boat is left lakeside, then perhaps the CDI furler makes sense as it can be reefed and provides the ease a cruiser is typically looking for. If you race and are short on crew, then perhaps a small boat furler is the answer as it's still class legal. If you have an old system that's working, then great and do what works for you. But if you're weighing out the cost of project and upgrades on your boat this summer. Might I suggest you try a dousing line first. You may find it will fit your needs quite well.

Cruising boats are as unique as the sailors who sail them and no one furler system works for everyone. Hopefully, this addition of Cruiser's Corner helps you to not only better understand furlers but also decide what will work best for your cruising style. In the end it will be the skipper's choice as to whether to furl or not to furl.

Fair winds my fellow sailors and well see you out on the water.