

**OFFSHORE SAILING PREPARATION – 20 TIPS**

1. Have a complete understanding of your below deck systems - engine/fuel, galley, heads, fresh water, electricity. With necessary spares and tools
2. A wind range for various sail combinations – each 5 knots what your sail plan should be for forward progress without heeling too much. (Laminated card)
3. Practice how to quickly and safely reef your mainsail – “reef early”
4. Identify best sail plan trim positions on track fair leads for jibs/Genoa (numbering)
5. Traveler and mainsheet trim positions
6. When to use your staysail (if you have one)
7. Inflatable vest must ALWAYS be worn when on deck (PLB attached, whistle, strobe)
8. Jack lines and tethers for going on deck – with an observer keeping an eye on you
9. Proper outer layer clothing – foul weather gear, booties, gloves, hat/watch cap
10. Sun protection – skin and eyes
11. VHF radio at the helm
12. Compass at the helm
13. Ability to use autopilot or hand steer
14. Windvane? How to use, how to disable and hand steer
15. Emergency steering plan if you lose hydraulics, or break a cable
16. Quick man overboard float, flag and / or strobe
17. Practice fast dropping of sails – sudden storm, MOB
18. Sailing at night – how see sail trim? Night vision
19. Drogue and how to deploy if you have to ride out a storm
20. Life raft/Ditch Bag / EPIRB