



# SHORTHANDED SAILING TECHNIQUES - 2024

*presented by*

JOHN NEAL

## 1. Developing an Onboard Safety Ethos

- Keep a tidy vessel.
- Establish emergency procedures.
- Practice night sailing.
- Gain a basic knowledge of engine and electrical systems.
- Establish and perform pre-departure inspections.

## 2. Gear that Makes Shorthanded Sailing Safer

- Dependable autopilot (and optionally windvane).
- Accurate instruments, VHF, AIS RAM mic in cockpit, MFD, easily read helm compass and binoculars.
- Harness, tether, high lifelines, and Lifesling.

## 3. Communications

- Clear and concise instructions, always repeat the command.
- Ensure all crew are fine/ready.
- Ask if you don't understand.
- Maintain a sterile cockpit at critical times.
- Options based on required range: VHF, IridiumGO!, Iridium satphone, STARLINK, and SSB
- Understand and practice radio protocol.
- Keep a "Happy Ship".

## 4. Watches

- Establish and post a workable watch schedule and standing orders.
- Situational awareness and responsibility – *The Queen of the North Disaster* – Colin Henthorne.
- Study and understand collision avoidance.
- Complete "Boat Checks".
- Healthy Life - [mahina.com/fitforlife.pdf](http://mahina.com/fitforlife.pdf).
- Sleep deprivation and fatigue.

## 5. Preventing and Treating Seasickness

- Prior to sailing
- Once underway
- Effective seasick medication: nonprescription and prescription.
- Follow the protocol documented on [mahina.com/seasickness](http://mahina.com/seasickness).

## 6. Weather

- Gain an overview of marine weather by reading RYA Weather Handbook.
- Study regional weather.
- Follow windy.com.
- Check out PredictWind.com
- Consider hiring a professional weather router. Commanders Weather - mahina special.
- Record barometer readings: [weems-plath.com/electronic-barometer](http://weems-plath.com/electronic-barometer) or BALDR from Amazon.

## 7. Navigation

- Keep a log – it's a legal requirement.
- Create laminated instruction cards for entering waypoints into electronic navigation.

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- Research destinations before departure, entering courses and waypoints and making moorage reservations if required.
- Establish alternative plans.
- Ask for and heed knowledgeable local advice.

**8. Creating Easier Sail Changes**

- Consider upgrading to more powerful furler and winches.
- Establish sail reduction and reefing guidelines. Print & laminate guideline and keep with logbook.
- Practice reefing in under 3 minutes, rigging preventer and develop gybing protocol.

**9. Heavy Weather Options**

- Study storm location and track.
- Practice proactive decision making. Don't wait to act!
- Know and practice the ten storm tactics.
- Invest in at least one storm sail and practice using it.
- Choose techniques that require the least physical exertion including fore-reaching and heaving-to.
- Consider carrying a drogue.

**10. Galley Essentials**

- Pre-make heathy easy-to-heat meals.
- Install a pump thermos for hot drinks, instant soups/noodles and freeze-dried meals.
- Provision with healthy snacks.

**11 Docking and Anchoring**

- Communication: distance off dock, depth.
- Calculate wind, current, swell and depth.
- Practice powering against spring lines.
- Optionally install remote controls for windlass and thruster.



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**John Neal's** 403,00 offshore miles include 6,000 miles singlehanded, six Cape Horn roundings plus voyages to Antarctica, Africa, Australia, and Spitsbergen. Since 1976, John's passion has been sharing his knowledge of ocean cruising through 232 sail-training expeditions worldwide aboard Mahina Tiare III, a Hallberg-Rassy 46 and various other vessels, boat purchase consultations, and through Mahina Offshore Cruising Workshops presented annually. Details on mahina.com.

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**Annapolis Boat Show/Cruisers College/Mahina Offshore Seminar – Oct. 13, 2024**

Join John Neal for an informative and comprehensive full day seminar. 18 dynamic presentations closely follow the included 260-page [Offshore Companion](#) (normally \$60). This highly organized format allows you to easily follow, understand and retain crucial information enabling you to save years and thousands of dollars as you prepare for your cruising adventures... Full outline: [www.mahina.com/seminars](http://www.mahina.com/seminars).

**2024 – 2025 Ocean Passage Training in the Scottish Isles or New Zealand**

Join John in Scotland for a 10-day intensive hands-on learning experience including a non-stop offshore passage of at least 100 miles. Daily instruction with documentation ensures that you totally master all aspects of operating and maintaining a modern ocean cruising boat. [www.mahina.com/sailing-schedule](http://www.mahina.com/sailing-schedule).

**Boat Selection and Purchase Consultation**

Searching for the perfect boat for your offshore cruise? For a flat fee of \$1500 John will use his extensive experience to help you evaluate, locate, and purchase the best possible boat within your budget. There is no time limit on your consultation.