

Trim Guide for Cruising Sails

North Sails Fogh Ltd., 2242 Lakeshore Blvd. West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8V 1A5

Our cruising sails are designed for ease of handling and excellent performance over a wide wind range. While it is not necessary to be the fastest boat on the water, it is helpful to know how to use your sails to achieve the full potential from your boat. The following will specify steps to set your sails correctly and hints to aid in handling your boat.

Cloth and Design

Soft cloth is synonymous with easy handling. That is what makes your North Fogh Cruising sail quick to fold and handle. But soft cloth stretches more than firm, more racing oriented fabrics. To compensate, Cruising sails have less "broadseaming" and "luff curve" resulting in a flatter more manageable shape. Computer designing and cutting however ensures smooth consistent shapes that while not as fast over their wind range, provide fast comfortable sailing. For improved performance while sacrificing ease of handling, ask about our "Offshore" or "Racing" sails.

Before Sailing

Tuning the mast is seldom done well at commissioning. Personal attention to tuning results in improved sail control. Sail control is critical for safe and enjoyable sailing in heavy air.

First, ensure that it is not leaning to one side (observe by measuring the main halyard to each gunnel to check for differences). Second, lean the mast aft in the boat about 6-12" (measured from the back of the mast to a weight hung from the main halyard). This is called rake. Do not confuse this with bend. Thirdly, and most importantly, tighten the rigging well and then a few more tunes. Loose rigging results in a loose forestay. A loose forestay means in heavy air, your jib or Genoa will become fuller, causing excessive heeling and loss of control. The tension of the forestay is directly proportional to the tension on the backstay.

Sail Shape

Main

Pulling the main halyard tightly ensures that no wrinkles will appear along the luff. If a winch is not available, try to horse the halyard up using the cleat. If a vertical wrinkle appears along the luff in light air, then lower the halyard slightly.

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Your main has an extra amount of fullness along the foot to help performance in light air and downwind. If winds increase, tightening the outhaul will flatten the bottom third of the sail.

To sheet your mainsail properly for reaching and running, ease the sail until a slight luff appears along the mast. To prevent the top part of the main from falling off to leeward and to keep the boom from going up in the air, a simple boom vang will help.

When sailing upwind, correct main sheeting is best achieved by studying the top batten. If the batten points to weather of the boom, the sheet is too tight. In most conditions, the batten should be parallel to the boom or pointing slightly to leeward.

As the wind increases from light to heavy, the outhaul and Cunningham (the press ring just above the tack) should be tightened. Tightening the Cunningham will bring the draft forward, ease the top batten to leeward and therefore reduce the heeling and weather helm. In very light conditions, ease the top batten to leeward and put twist in the main by keeping the boom on the centreline and easing the sheet. This allows the unsteady light air wind to flow past your sail without stalling. The leechline is there only to prevent fluttering along the leech. It should only be necessary in heavy air.

Headsails

Again, ensure that the halyard is tight enough to prevent wrinkles in the luff. As the wind increases, it is best to tighten the halyard further to keep the draft forward and prevent luff wrinkles caused by stretch. The correct sheet lead location upwind is determined by sighting an imaginary line from half way up the luff, through the clew, down to the track or rail. Where the line meets the deck is where the lead should be placed. As well, you should attempt to put the same amount of twist in the leech as in the main. For optimum reaching, the sheet lead should be moved forward and outboard to allow the sail to luff evenly from top to bottom and to keep the leech firm for maximum drive. Leech lines are designed to tension the leech tape only, which tends to flutter in heavy air. Do not use leech lines for correcting shape or in light air.

Tips on Boat Handling

Weather Helm

Weather helm (when the boat wants to head into the wind) is caused by excessive heel. Too much weather helm is bad because it makes the boat difficult to steer. To reduce weather helm, ease the mainsheet in puffs, change to a smaller headsail to control heel and put a reef in the main. Remember that the main forces the boat to head up and the

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jib forces the boat to lay off. Don't fight against your sails when you need to lay off. To avoid an obstacle, the mainsheet must be eased considerably. Your boat and sails are designed to give you a balanced helm enabling easy steering. Cruising with only one sail or incorrectly sheeted sails makes the skipper's task more difficult.

Heavy Air Sailing

Always keep the boat going fast. A stalled boat in heavy air is most dangerous. When in doubt, reduce the sail area to keep the boat on an even keel. (No more than 28 degrees). It is best to reduce headsail size first. For example, from a #1 Genoa (150%) to a #3 or Working Jib. With furling gear, reef the sail either 2 or 3 feet or 2/3rds, not in between. Unless you have modern furling gear that winds up the fuller center portions of the sail first as in the North Harken furling gear, your reefed sail will appear very full and thus will be hard to handle. With today's designs, the Genoa is the driving force, so reef the main first and then begin to reduce headsail. Tighten the outhaul and Cunningham on the main to free the leech. Sail the boat close to the wind when beating and always steer away from the wind in puffs when reaching.

Heavy air or storm conditions can be fun instead of terrifying if you follow a few simple rules. Reduce area by putting in reefs or setting storm jib. Ease sheets and drive the boat through the waves. Allow the top part of the sail twist off to keep the heeling moment down. For example, it is more important upwind to pinch even if the Genoa luffs than to let the boat heel. This is safer and faster.

Light Air Sailing

Carry a slight heel by placing crew weight to leeward. Ease controls on sails for maximum draft. Do not over trim sheets or airflow will stall and speed will be considerably reduced (i.e., keep lots of twist in sails).

Spinnakers

The biggest and most exciting sail, the spinnaker should not be used when it is too windy if you are just beginning. It will add much speed and performance to the boat in any air. Correct pole height is determined by keeping the two clews even (and the pole should be perpendicular to the apparent wind). Always try to keep the spinnaker as far in front of the boat as possible.

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Gennaker

The answer to the hassles of spinnaker flying is the North Gennaker. Shaped like a spinnaker but flown like a Genoa, the Gennaker is easy to fly and fun. A Snuffer makes it easy to hoist and douse.

Tips on Sail Care

The sail's life will be greatly extended with proper care. When folding the mainsail, try to make as few wrinkles as possible (pull the leech tight as you fold). Use a boom cover to protect the sail as constant sunlight will cause the cloth to fatigue. Our easy-to-handle cloth will in fact become more flexible with time, but it would be best to fold, flake or roll sails as much as possible and certainly before winter storage. Ensure that all pins, spreaders, etc. are wrapped in tape to prevent ripping the sails. Always dry sails before folding or storing, but never dry by flapping them in the wind. Such flapping or flogging on land, or while sailing, reduces cloth life quickly. Small rips and tears can be mended with Ripstop. Larger tears should be repaired by us. Always cover furling headsails (vertical panel leechcut headsails with U.V. 99 sun protected cloth on the leech obviates the need for covers).

We have no doubt that sails can last for many years of hard sailing. Following our advice will help, but care taken not to use sails past their recommended wind range will definitely contribute. Although the size and weight of the boat is an important factor, the following is a rough apparent wind range guide for a 30' boat:

	Upwind	Reaching
Full main	0-15	0-18
First reef	15-22	18-26
Second reef	22 and up	26 and up
Gennaker	--	0-20
#1 Genoa	0-15	0-16
#2 Genoa	14-20	16-22
#3 Genoa	15-25	22 and up
Working jib	20 and up	25 and up

We have taken great care to produce well-designed quality sails. We hope this information will help you to enjoy your sails and sailing. If you have any problems or wish further information, please to not hesitate to write or call us at the loft.