

Kemp Sails

Getting the best out of your sails

Making your sails last is important - but so too is using them efficiently. Hundreds of books and magazine articles have been written on the subject, but below we've listed a few of the basics.

Genoas

- **Make sure the sheet leads are in the right position on the track.** As a rule of thumb, the sheet's angle should bisect the clew. With the lead too far aft, the leech will be slack when the foot's tight; too far forward, and the leech will be hard against the spreaders while the foot is still some way off the bottom of the shrouds.
- **Use the telltales.** They will indicate whether the lead is correct. If the top windward telltale breaks first, the lead is too far aft. If the bottom one goes first, move the lead forward. Ideally, the windward telltales all the way down the luff should break (stop streaming) simultaneously when you luff gently into the wind with the sheet in tight
- **Move the sheet lead forward when you reef the sail.** As you reef a roller genoa, the clew moves up and forward - so you'll need to move the lead forward to maintain the correct sheeting angle. If you've rolled the telltales up in the sail, you can add extra sets at known reef positions. Otherwise, watch the sail - the lead needs to be moved forward if you lose drive at the top of the luff before the bottom.
- **Don't forget forestay tension.** If your backstay is too slack (or the cap shrouds on a fractional rig) your genoa will be too full - the main symptoms are excessive heel and loss of pointing ability. Try tightening the rigging. Watch the halyard tension too, in light winds you shouldn't have any vertical creases, but as the wind builds you'll need a tighter luff. When you've established the right tension for average conditions, mark across the headfoil and luff tape a few feet above the tack, that way, when the marks come into line, you're at the right point to start adjusting for more or less wind if necessary.

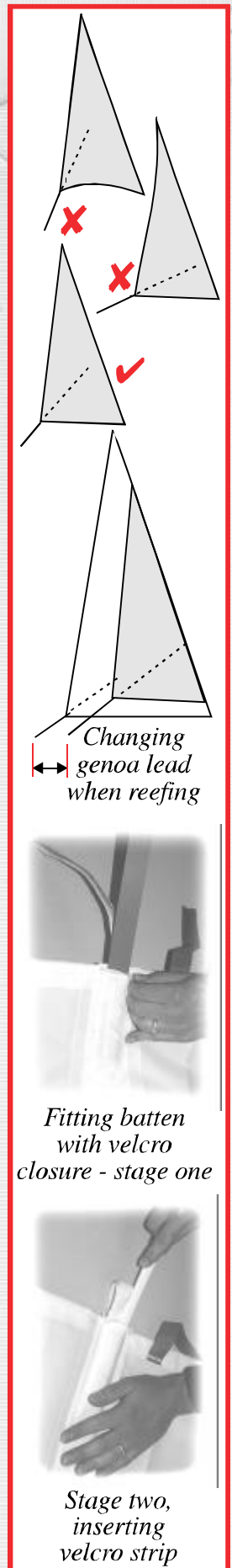
Mainsails

- **Keep the top telltale streaming.** If it isn't, your leech is too tight - ease the mainsheet and/or kicking strap.
- **When sailing to windward, keep the boom central until weather helm builds up.** The mainsail's leech is primarily responsible for making the boat point upwind - so keep it working. As a general rule, this means keeping the boom fairly central until the boat starts protesting through the helm, heeling too much, or losing speed. Then you'll need to start easing the traveller - or, if you don't have a traveller, ease the sheet but make sure the kicking strap is reasonably tight.
- **Don't over-sheet.** This applies to both genoas and mainsails. If the genoa's too tight, it will back-wind the main and you'll pull the main in to compensate, resulting in too much weather helm, heel and loss of speed. **Use the cunningham.** It'll help flatten the sail, move the draft forward and open the leech in stronger winds.

General Tips

- With tapered battens, make sure you insert the thin end first.
- For easier mainsail reefing, mark the halyard at the point where you can hook the reef spectacle over the tack horn. This saves extra trips along the deck.

If you're experiencing problems with sail trim, please call us. Quite apart from wanting happy customers, we'd like boats with Kemp sails to be seen sailing well. So it's in our interest to help you!



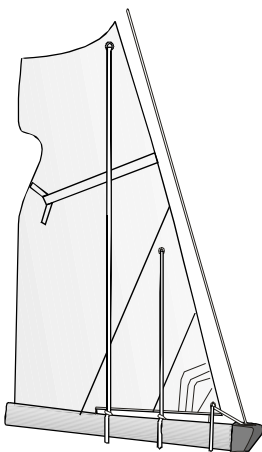
Looking after your sails



Turn adjuster clockwise on the Sailman batten box to tension batten



The halyard is attached to the forward eye in the head plate of the main



Loose foot at the clew of the mainsail leaves space for reefing lines

We want your new sails to give many years' service. That's one of the reasons why we invite all our UK customers to return them for an annual inspection. At our loft, we can rectify some of the effects of wear-and-tear - and, if necessary, take steps to minimise future damage. But how long your sails last ultimately depends on the way they're treated. So, on this sheet, we've covered some of the most important aspects of sail-care. If you have questions about any aspect of care or maintenance we haven't covered here, please ask - we're always happy to help.

- **Don't let them flog!** Letting your sails flap in the wind is one of the quickest ways of ruining their shape.
- **Wash the salt out.** Salt is abrasive and will wear away at both the fabric and stitching. It also attracts moisture, which can quickly lead to the growth of mould and mildew.
- **Don't put them away wet for long periods.** It's impossible to leave a boat with the sails dry every time - but don't leave them wet in their bags or covers for too long. When storing damp sails down below, spread them out as much as you can.
- **Remove the battens for prolonged storage.** This saves the elastic at the inboard end of the pockets.
- **Don't scrunch them up!** Hard Dacrons and laminates in particular don't like being creased any more than necessary. Flake, fold loosely or, if possible, roll them up and store straight and flat.
- **Keep them clean.** Most dirt marks and stains are purely cosmetic - but we'd all rather have nice clean sails. Water, mild soap and a sponge is usually the best way to start. In any case, the sooner you get marks off the better, because they'll become more difficult to remove with time. More stubborn patches can be tackled with a detergent powder called Bio-Tex, sold in supermarkets. Avoid acids, strong chemicals and over-zealous scrubbing, all of which can damage the fibres. With blood, spit on it as quickly as possible - saliva is the best way to get it off.
- **Protect them from the sun.** Don't leave roller genoas on the headfoil if you're not using the boat for a while - take them down and stow them below. Even if the sail has a UV protective strip, it'll last longer this way. And you'll reduce the chance of rain water running down inside the sail and staining the leech.
- **Roll the headsail up tightly.** When leaving the boat for short periods, make sure the genoa is rolled up tightly so the wind can't catch it. Carry on rolling until the sheets are wrapped round a couple of times, then cleat them off securely.
- **Protect laminates from chafe.** Laminated fabrics without a taffeta backing are vulnerable to damage from chafing, especially around the guardrails and spreaders. We'll give you anti-chafe patches with the sails which you need to put on in the right places.
- **Beware split pins!** Tape over split pins and sharp edges around shroud bases, spreader ends, pulpits and anywhere else your spinnaker or cruising chute can rub when being hoisted and lowered. One sharp pin could do a lot of damage.
- **Don't leave your sails under tension.** Slacken the halyard on roller reefing genoas when leaving the boat, and ease the mainsail's clew outhaul.

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