



Yachting New Zealand

Trailer Yacht

Cruising tips

Trailer Yacht Cruising Tips

“After many years of racing and some cruising on trailer yachts we decided to get back into cruising and it’s been great. There are always other cruisers to meet and the main reason for putting this booklet together was the growing number of people new to sailing purchasing boats which is great.

This information is aimed at new trailer yacht owners but may also be helpful to all trailer yacht cruisers.

Trailer yachts really are dual purpose boats, enabling you to go cruising or racing or both, with the advantage of being able move them around different cruising venues around the county.”

Wayne Holdt, Regional Development Manager.
July 2022

Initial tips from Wayne

It will be a very steep learning curve to begin with, so plan things through first. Some things to consider include:

- When anchoring, make sure you don’t reverse faster than the person on the bow is able to let the rope out, knots, etc.
- Make sure you are head-to-wind before trying to pull the mainsail up or lowering it
- Release the boom topping lift once the mainsail is up
- Pull the boom topping lift back on before you release the main halyard
- Make sure your battery is in a battery box and is well secured
- Lock your keel down when windy
- Pull your tender in before going into a marina or jetty
- Check the forecast so you get an offshore wind to moor in overnight
- Have a plan if you have to shift the boat at night to find shelter
- Be aware of wind gusts around high hills and cliffs

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Solar Power

This is easily the best option for cruising yachts but it's sometimes difficult to know what setup to go with because some are excellent and others fail to meet your needs. I was lucky enough to meet some people familiar with solar power while away cruising on their Noelex 25. They had recently installed a unit which worked so well I copied it.

I bought a 50 watt solar pannel, 4mm cables and the MPPT controller, 100 amp hour deep cycle battery and 40 litre ICECO fridge bin. I have been really pleased with the unit and have not run out of power, even after 10 days away.

There are a few things to check with items like fridges: the vents at the bottom on either side of the fridge need to be well ventilated and also need to be cleaned regularly with a vaccum cleaner to clear any dust.

I'm sure there are many other options, but this works well as a fridge. You would need another solar panel and battery to operate an electric keel, which more people are starting to use.



Solar Panel Mount

I used some old I-section traveller track which works well, but box or angle-alloy sections would work fine. The post needs to be stainless steel. The edges of the solar panel are quite sharp, so a light file and some foam glued on the corners is a good idea.



No Fridge?

Not a problem. No one had them once. The key is to invest in a good chillybin that has a good-sealing lid. The ICEY-TEK one pictured is 40 litres and works well. Having pre-made frozen meals will help to keep it colder for longer. It's also useful to have another smaller chillybin with frozen in it and tape around the lid joint. This will keep the contents frozen for quite a while, but it will be a case of trial and error.



Self-Tacker

If you have a self-tacking jib and don't want the jib sheets to cross your front hatch, which is common on Ross 780s (see picture below), then check out the Noelex 25 system (pictured above).



Rudders

Rudders on cruising boats are often hard to get up and down. Most use a rope pull-down and pull-up system but this can be hard to operate if the rudder is tight in the rudder stock. A Teflon washer or ice-cream lid on either side can also work.

Rudder angle is also very important as your rudder only has to move a small amount aft at the bottom to create a lot of pressure on the helm (weather helm - making the boat want to turn into the wind). If your rudder is fully down and is still hard to steer, you may need to rake your rudder forward slightly. The first time I sailed my boat, the rudder was very heavy so I drilled a new pivot point in the rudder. I went from battling to steer the boat to being able to use two fingers to steer in any breeze. Unbelievably, the previous owners had assumed that was how it should be.

Rudder Pull Down

You can attach a pull-down rope to the front of your rudder. Check there is enough clearance between the front of the rudder and the inside of the rudder stock for the rope, then lead it to a cleat on the tiller. This may not need any purchase.

Rudder Pull Up

This will need some purchase. The lower down the trailing edge of the rudder you have the pull-up point, the better. If you're racing the boat as well, you won't want it in the water so it will be a compromise.



Deck Winches

These will need servicing if you have them. This means taking them apart, removing the old grease with degreaser and then re-greasing them with winch grease. Be careful when taking it apart so you don't lose the little springs that hold the flippers.

You can watch an example of how to service a Lewmar 16 selftailer winch in this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbaQkj_V7IQ

Egg container



Jacklines

There are plenty of options, but it would be useful to check what others use on a boat comparable to the one you have. They seem to work best with fully battened mainsails.



Keels

Make sure you're able to lock your keel down. A lot of people have trouble with the winch wire snapping on a swing keel, most are now replacing the wire with Dyneema rope. If using an electric keel winch It would be a good idea to have some sort of manual override in case you have an electrical problem.

See the links below for some options for an electric keel winch:

[Trailer Sailer Place website](#)

[Electric Winch Certa 3000lb](#)

Lighting

These inflatable solar lights are great for the cockpit and last for ages. White cabin lights tend to attract lots of bugs, so consider a red light to try to slow the number of bugs in your cabin. I put red duct tape over white LEDs which works well.





Boom tent

These can be as simple and a tarpaulin purchased from somewhere like Mitre 10, like the one pictured. I prefer a system where the sail battens run from each side to create a curve. This gives you more room and the feeling of not being closed in while still being able to see out and talk to the boats next to you.

I have recently changed to using a white material which lets a lot more light in.

On the smaller boats like the Noelex 22 (pictured red) you can also make a false gooseneck which slides up the sail track and creates more head room.

If your boat has a short boom, you can slide a piece of alloy in the outer end and reconnect your topper to the end of it to get a longer boom tent. There are plenty of options, as you can see in the pictures below.





Bimini and dodgers

There are other ways to provide shelter in the cockpit. A bimini top is an open canvas structure that sits over the cockpit of the boat and is supported by metal frames and there are plenty of options available. You will need to fold a bimini back to go sailing to ensure you can access the mainsheet. You also need to make sure you have enough room to mount your solar panel. Get one with a solid structure as it will get blown around.

A dodger, also known as a spray hood, is a frame-supported canvas structure that covers part of the cockpit and the entrance to the boat's interior. It's more practical than a bimini but reduces visibility and you would need to consider if it needs to be folded forward to allow you to use your winches and jammers.



Condensation

Most condensation occurs in the front V berth of your boat. A small triangular cover, like the one pictured, will help reduce condensation. if mounted off the deck.



Halyards

A lot of trailer yachts have changed to spectra halyards as the old wire ones have broken. For most boats around 6m, a 6mm spectra rope is sufficient. For a 7.8m boat, you may require an 8mm rope. Make sure you secure your halyards away from the mast to stop them banging against the mast when not in use, especially at night. If you have hanks on your jib, consider running a small line from your cockpit up to the bow and then up through the jib hanks and tied to the head of the jib. This makes lowering the jib from the cockpit much easier.

Boom topping lift

Some use the spinnaker or main halyard to hold their boom up when not sailing, but I prefer to have a separate topping lift when cruising, so I don't have to disconnect it to put a sail up. You can use a rope from the top of the mast and have a cleat at the outer boom end to adjust the boom up or down.



Rig tension

Firm is best. Ask others what they think or check out similar boats. Remember to let your rig tension off if you leave your rig up. It's not unheard of for the deck to compress if you don't do this.

Trailer lights

LED lights are the way to go. Give some thought to using a lightboard that you can place on the back of the boat when transporting.

<https://www.prescotttrailers.co.nz/resources/articles/trailer-wiring>

Window sealant

There's nothing worse than a boat with leaky windows. There are many products that claim to work but, after asking plenty of people, I went for Sikaflex and it worked well. You will need an extra couple of hands and plenty of masking tape to fit them. Most will be perspex or polycarbonate and, unless you know what you're doing, it's probably a good idea to take your old one in (where??) and get them to make them for you. I have used Smith & Smith glass before, and they were good.



Mainsheet traveller

While these are a must-have for racing, some cruisers have removed them to create more room in the cockpit, especially when using a boom tent. You could set up a system where the mainsheet is snap shackled at both the floor fitting and boom so it's easy to move it out of the way when you're not using it.

Flush floor mount

These are great on the cockpit floor to save your toes.



Fenders

Fenders are a must-have. Again, there are a few types: some are round, and inflatable and others are flat and made of cell foam.



Safety equipment

Yachting New Zealand have three different safety standards depending on the type of sailing you do. Part V (Trailer Yachts).

Category C: This applies to trailer yachts sailing in substantially enclosed waters under the direct supervision of a club or squadron and in the presence of other craft.

If you're heading up to the Hauraki Gulf or Bay of Islands, you should look at Category B or A.

Listed below are some key aspects as a guide. For the comprehensive list see here:

[YAC240587 YachtingNZ Safety Regulations - Mar2022 - ONLINE_0.pdf](#) The regulations for trailer yachts start on page 81.

Basic standards for Category C

Washboards capable of sealing off the cabin

Bow and stern fitting suitable for towing

Cockpit drains - as per approved designs by NZTYA

Batteries sealed and secured in case of knockdown

Fuel tank and gas bottles stowed so any leaks will not enter the boat

General equipment

Fixed or portable boarding ladder

Boat name and sail number displayed on hull and buoyant equipment

Tool kit

Towline (twice the length of your boat)

Anchor of relevant size, chain one boat length, total warp 46m (longer if lake sailing)

One 9-litre bucket on a lanyard

Torch, waterproof with spare batteries

First aid kit to specifications in handbook

Navigation equipment

1 boat hook

Reliable compass

Navigation lights fitted and operational on all yachts sailing/motoring after sunset

Emergency equipment

Radio receiver for weather reports

A marine VHF is recommended, although not required

Fire extinguisher, properly mounted for emergencies

Flares are recommended

Safety equipment

Easily accessible and the correctly-sized lifejacket for each person on board to be worn while racing and while under sail when cruising (floatation certified where possible). Whistle and light if available (crotch strap for inflatable jackets is optional but recommended)

Bow and stern lines

Trailer yachts commonly have one bow line and two stern lines. The bow line needs to be long enough to reach the cockpit so docking on jetties is a little easier.

Bow and stern lines are used on all boats and in all conditions when tying up. These lines run forward from a fixed point (usually a horn cleat) at the bow, and aft from a cleat at the stern.

Bow and stern spring lines run aft from the bow and forward from the stern. They prevent the boat from surging forward and back when the area is affected by swells or passing boats. Spring lines are also used to help bring the boat alongside the dock or pull the bow or stern away from the dock when under power.

When anchoring at a lake, you can power back to the beach and secure two stern lines to the shore to stop the boat swinging. These lines need to be quite long at some venues.



Anchors

Your 'ground tackle' will be made up of an anchor, a length of chain (at least as long as your boat) and the warp, usually three-strand nylon rope long enough to be at least seven times the average depth of the water you expect to anchor in, probably longer in lakes. Your chandler can advise what size chain, rope and anchor is best for your boat, but generally I find that it's best to use the strongest and heaviest you or your crew can manage.



CQR (plow) anchor



Danforth anchor

There are many types of anchors, but the Danforth and plow (CQR) are most commonly found on trailer yachts. Most carry a Danforth, because it folds relatively flat and is easy to stow. The tips of the flutes on new Danforth can be very sharp and may need to be ground off a bit. The CQR (plow) provides the best holding in most conditions. It's good practice to carry a spare anchor.

The anchor chain has two functions. It is resistant to chafing against rocks at the bottom that would otherwise cut your anchor line. Its weight also helps the anchor to maintain its grip, as its weight will be pulling closer to horizontal.

Your anchor warp (rope) needs to absorb the shock loadings caused by waves, and a nylon line is best for this. If you used a non-stretch line, a sudden jerk on the line could break the anchor free.

Running an anchor line from the bow to the cockpit and then handling the anchor from the cockpit is possible in light conditions. You will probably need to work from the bow in heavy conditions.

Make sure enough warp (or line to the anchor) is let out and an adequate depth of water is present along the entire swing radius of the anchorage. You should also be aware of changing water depths with tides when anchored.

As a guide, I use a Danforth S10, 8m of 8mm chain and 100m of 10mm warp on my 7.8m yacht.

Soft spots

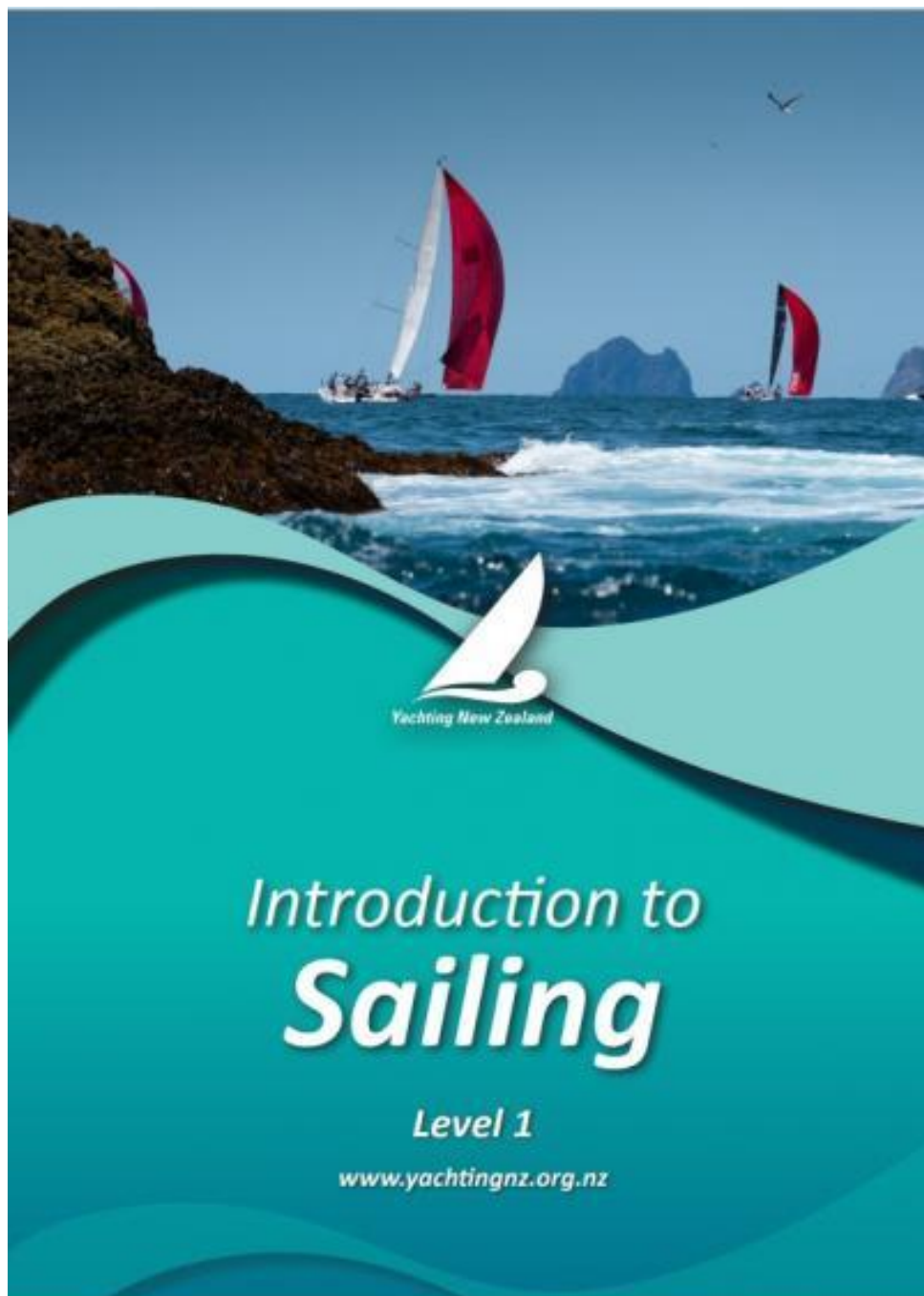
These can appear wherever water has been sitting, or under stanchions and fittings. It's a long job but removing all fittings and resealing all bolts and fittings will make a difference in the long run. Gelcoat is best for cosmetic chips on fiberglass boats. On a ply boat, make sure you sand back to solid timber and then use epoxy to fix the spot.

Recommended publications

Yachting New Zealand Introduction to Sailing

The recently published Introduction to Sailing – Level 1, which is great resource for anyone wanting to know the basics of sailing a trailer yacht, keelboat or dinghy.

<https://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/shop/introduction-sailing-level-1>



There are many cruising publications available. Here are a few good one and most can be found online or in bookstores.

- Pickmere Atlas by A. H. Pickmere and Janet M. Watkins
- Royal Akarana Yacht Club Coastal Cruising Handbook (<https://rayc.co.nz/product/coastal-cruising-handbook/>)
- New Zealand's Hauraki Gulf by David Thatcher
- New Zealand's Northland Coast by David Thatcher
- Island Cruising Association cruising guides (<http://www.islandcruising.co.nz/>)
- Boat Books (<https://www.boatbooks.co.nz/cruznz.html>)

Weather information

- PredictWind - <https://www.predictwind.com>
- Windguru - <https://www.windguru.cz>
- MetVUW - <http://www.metvuw.com>
- Windy - <https://www.windy.com>
- MetService - <http://www.metservice.com>
- Tidal information - <http://www.boaties.co.nz/tides>

Cruising & trailer yacht information

New Zealand Trailer Yacht Association <https://www.nztya.nz/> info on history, design, ratings etc.
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/nztraileryachtassoc/>

Bay Of Plenty Trailer Yacht Squadron <https://www.boptys.net/> there is plenty of info on cruising Lake Rotoiti, Lake Tarawera under the cruising tab.

Noelex 25 Class Association Cruising Guide <https://www.noelex25.org/cruising-guides-1?fbclid=IwAR1oIRqpfS3hn4g4bq6qt7DzuOSyk2A6EXrgdKgVOTu6mAKCrAfP2KJaHe8> Lots of good info on lake cruising venues in both the North and South Islands.

Otago Trailer Yacht Squadron <https://www.sporty.co.nz/OTYS/> click on cruising. Plenty of info on South Island cruising spots

Waikato Trailer Yacht Squadron <http://www.waikatoyachtsquadron.org.nz/>

Canterbury Trailer Yacht Squadron website <https://cya.org.nz/groups/canterbury-trailer-yacht-squadron/>

Southland Trailer Yacht Squadron: Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Southland-Trailer-Yacht-Squadron-143443642349085>

Gazelle Facebook page

https://www.facebook.com/groups/537611244603703/?hoisted_section_header_type=recently_seen&multi_permaLinks=537732547924906

Bonito Aquarius Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/smallyachtgunkholers/>

Ross 780 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/860332514005073/>

Tasman 20 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/tasman20yachts/>

Jim Young Trailer Yachts Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/jytyachts/>

Farr 6000 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/341125850385778/>

Farr 5000 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1709492672526164>

Noelex 22 website <http://www.noelix22.org/>

Noelex 22 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1395689630687517/>

Trojan 750 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1048416048921427/>

Hartley 16 Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057534065715>

Noelex 25 Association website <https://www.noelix25.org/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/581885568921774>

Yachting New Zealand affiliated yacht clubs

<https://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/clubs/find-club>

Yachting New Zealand affiliated class associations

<https://www.yachtingnz.org.nz/clubs/class-associations>

