

INDIA BOATING

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> **SPECIAL!**
Mumbai
International
Boat Show

RIDE THE WAVE



LEARN TO SAIL!

Using the wind to move your craft is both a skill and an art. Knowing where the wind comes from and how to steer your boat to make use of this free form of energy can be learnt. To optimize the effects of wind and water relative to the boat performance is an art. It is not difficult to get started and it may provide you with a lifelong passion! Where do you start?

For someone who does not have sailing friends, the best option is to join a sailing school. Or better join a sailing club that offers beginner courses. The club also offers the possibility to go sailing with others. Anyway, a starter course may take about a week and teaches you the basic principles which are essential to go sailing.

Once you have done the beginner course, sailing schools and clubs usually offer boats for rent allowing you to gain practice with and without the help of a coach. Before you can take your own boat out, you may have to get a skipper-license. The syllabus usually includes learning the rules of the road, boat safety, basic navigation and knowledge of local waters. Once you have this proof of competence, you may take your boat out and go sailing.

The learning curve almost always starts in dinghies. A dinghy is an open sailboat and depending on her size may carry from one up to three or four crew. Because you sit close to the water, you get a good feel for the boat's movements. You quickly learn the operation of the tiller (steering) and sail trim (position of the sails relative to the wind direction). The coordination of tiller and sailtrim allows the wind to propel your boat and for some that is the beginning of their sailing career.

Dinghies come in many sizes and shapes. What is important is that your dinghy is suitable for the waters you are taking her out on. Safety is an important aspect and the responsibility for the boat and crew always rests with the skipper. Wearing lifejackets and appropriate sailing attire is important to protect you from the elements and provide you with the necessary buoyancy in case of a capsize. Your dinghy, her rig and equipment must be in good condition to operate safely and to withstand the forces of the waves and strong winds. Out there you do not want anything to break down.

Whilst sailing principles can be learnt, the art of sailing is experience which can only be gained by going out sailing as often as you can. Choosing inland or coastal waters and trying tacks and gybes under different



SHIP'S COURSE AND WIND DIRECTION

SAILING HAS ITS OWN JARGON DEVELOPED OVER TIME AND GOING BACK TO THE EARLY SEAFARERS.

ONE THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT THE COURSE OF A SHIP IS EXPRESSED AS THE DIRECTION SHE GOES (SAY 90 DEGREES EAST MEANS THE SHIP IS HEADING TOWARDS THE EAST).

NOT SO WITH THE WIND. THE WIND IS EXPRESSED AS THE DIRECTION IT ORIGINATES FROM (SAY A SOUTHERLY WIND ORIGINATES FROM THE SOUTH)

circumstances will improve your skills and build your confidence.

Soon you will learn the effects of wind shifts and you will start reading the wind. You will get a feel for the water conditions and the way to steer on the waves and using these elements to your advantage. If the waters are tidal, you will learn to understand high and low water and the effects of tidal currents. All this will bring you closer to nature and let you appreciate nature and its beauty. It will provide you with a sense of freedom and adventure.

From small dinghies with a lifting keel (centerboard) you may upgrade to keelboats with fixed keels and overnight accommodation. Apart from monohull sailing boats one may choose a multihull craft (two hulls is a



SAILTRIM

- Head to wind:** boat is directed into the wind
- Beating:** sailing the highest possible angle to the wind (approx. 45 degrees)
- Reaching:** sailing with the wind angle of approx. 90 degrees
- Broad reaching:** sailing with a wind angle of approx. 135 degrees
- Running:** sailing with the wind from behind (approx. 180 degrees)

catamaran, three hulls is a trimaran). Windsurfing and kite surfing have gained popularity and are practical because your sailing board can be carried home.

The choice of craft is dependant on your own experience and your interpretation on what type of craft best fulfills your needs. There are such a variety of sailing boats and so much theory about what should and should not be, that there is an ideal boat for everyone. A simple dinghy is not expensive. They can be homebuilt in wood or wood epoxy from simple plans readily available. Sailing your self-built boat is quite an experience! But the most important thing is to be on the water no matter in what type of boat!

optimize your rig setting and trim of the sails and you will learn that sailing fast is not all that is required to win. Tactics come into play and he who understands the weather and water has an important advantage. And of course the racing rules which are an important part of the tactics.

A good website to start is www.rya.org.uk where you will find an excellent syllabus from beginner to instructor courses. There is free advice from their expert technical, cruising, racing and training teams. Should you be interested in building your own dinghy, look at www.woodenboat.com where you can look at plans for all kinds of home built boats. For those serious about boatbuilding, there are boatbuilding schools in USA, Australia and Europe.

Contact me with your questions. I look forward to seeing you out on the water soon! **IB**

Author

Bart Kimman

is a yachtsman by passion. He grew up in a yachting environment and developed his sailing skills from a very young age. He sees the emerging yachting scene in Asia as a great challenge and is keen to assist the new boaters to get on the water!



To improve your sailing skills it is fun to participate in sailboat racing. You can compare your skill level to that of others and usually you improve your sailing skills quickly in a fleet of similar boats. You will learn how to