

## MORE ON SPINNAKERS

### Packing the spinnaker



Take the spinnaker below and make sure you have the bag to hand. You will also need three short lengths of rope.

1. Tie the head of the spinnaker to a grabrail. (The head must say HEAD – otherwise it's easy to get the wrong corner.)
2. Run your hand down one edge of the sail to make sure there are no twists.
3. Tie the second corner of the spinnaker to another grabrail.
4. Run your hand along the next edge of the sail.
5. Tie the third corner of the sail to a grabrail. The corners are now well separated with the bulk of the sail hanging between.
6. Put the bag under the sail and bundle the spinnaker into it.
7. Untie the three corners and tie them so they are poking out of the bag radially, and can't get twisted.
8. Finally, close the lid of the bag.

If you pack the sail correctly, when you come to hoist the spinnaker you can shackle on the sheets and halyard to the correct corners and know the sail will go up without a twist!

### If it all goes wrong

What would you do if someone fell overboard when the spinnaker was up and drawing? It would take ages to get the thing down and get back to the victim.

On my boat we have a rule that there are no stopper knots in the ends of the sheets and guys or the halyard. If we get in a real mess we can let all these ropes go and the spinnaker (trailing the ropes) will just blow away. Then we can go back for our friend.

## Hoisting the spinnaker



The spinnaker is hoisted behind the genoa and in the lee of the mainsail. These two sails shield it from the wind on its way aloft.

1. Decide which side the pole will be set. This is usually the windward side, or on a run the opposite side to the mainsail.
2. Take the spinnaker bag forward and clip it to the leeward guardrail. (Otherwise it will fall over the side after the hoist.)
3. Clip the sheet to its corner of the sail.
4. Take the guy outside the windward shroud, around the forestay and back to the bag. Clip the guy onto its corner of the spinnaker.
5. Make sure the halyard runs outside everything and clip it onto the head of the spinnaker.

Now set up the pole.

- a. Attach the uphaul and downhaul to the pole before you move it from its mountings. The ropes will prevent the pole falling overboard if you drop it.
- b. Clip the pole to the mast.
- c. Clip the guy through the jaws at the outer end of the pole.
- d. Call back to the cockpit for them to raise the pole until it's horizontal.

Now for the hoist.

1. The helmsman will bear away onto a broad reach/run. This enables the main and genoa to blanket the spinnaker on its way up.
2. Pull back on the guy so one corner of the sail is pulled out of the bag and up to the forestay.
3. Wind the guy back a little more so the pole is off the forestay.
4. On the command 'Hoist' pull up the spinnaker. Do not pull in the sheet yet – you don't want the sail to fill on its way up.
5. If the spinnaker starts to wrap round the forestay, the helmsman luffs a little to get a bit of air into it.
6. Finally, when the sail is fully up, pull in the sheet until the sail fills. Then roll up the genoa.

In some boats a sock is used to hoist the spinnaker as shown for gennakers on page 6.

## Trimming the spinnaker

Start with the pole.

- Set the height of the pole so the two lower corners of the spinnaker are the same height above the deck. Raise the outboard end of the pole by letting off the downhaul and winching up the uphaul, and vice-versa to lower the pole.
- Set the angle of the pole fore and aft by letting off the sheet and winding in the guy to swing the pole aft. The pole should be at right angles to the wind i.e. at right angles to the Windex. This spreads the sail so it can catch the most wind.

Then trim the sail in the normal way using the sheet.

- Let out the sheet until the windward edge of the spinnaker begins to curl.
- Wind in the sheet until the curl settles down i.e. the sail just fills.
- Keep letting out a bit of sheet and winding it back in to keep the sail as far out as you can without it flapping.
- If the wind shifts and you can't wind in the sheet fast enough to keep the sail full, ask the helmsman to bear away to help you.

## Gybing the spinnaker

Ask if you are doing an end-for-end gybe or a dip-pole gybe.

### End-for-end gybe with one sheet & one guy



1. The helmsman bears away onto a run.
2. Wind in the mainsheet so the boom lies along the centreline of the boat.
3. Clip yourself on to the jackstay and move to the mast.
4. Unclip the pole from the mast and clip it to the new guy. The pole is now across the boat, suspended from the two guys.
5. Unclip the other end of the pole from the guy and clip the pole onto the mast. If there is too much pressure ask someone in the cockpit to ease out a little on the pole uphaul.
6. Trim the spinnaker and let out the mainsheet so the boom goes out on the new side.

### End-for-end gybe with two sheets & two guys

First, take the pressure on the two sheets. Ease out the two guys. Then gybe as above.

### Dip-pole gybe with two sheets & two guys



The idea is that the outer end of the pole is lowered, the guy is released from the jaws of the pole, the pole swings across the foredeck, is clipped to the new guy and raised to the horizontal again.

The only problem is that the pole is too long to swing across so it is first slid up the mast to improve the geometry.

1. The helmsman bears away onto a run.
2. Wind in the mainsheet until the boom is central.
3. Take the pressure on the two sheets and slacken the two guys.
4. Push the spinnaker pole up the mast track.
5. Ask for the pole uphaul to be slackened slowly.
6. Unclip the guy from the jaws of the pole.
7. Swing the pole across to the new side.
8. Put the new guy into the pole's jaws.
9. Slide the pole down the mast.
10. Ask for the pole to be raised using the uphaul.
11. Trim the spinnaker and let out the mainsheet so the boom goes out on the new side.

### Lowering the spinnaker

Before you begin make sure all the spinnaker sheets and guys and the halyard are free of tangles and ready to run.

Position someone on the spinnaker halyard, someone on the guy and someone on the leeward deck ready to pull in on the sheet and bring the spinnaker down into the cockpit or down the hatch.

If you are very shorthanded you may need to put the boat on autohelm so the helmsman can come forward and handle the guy and the halyard.

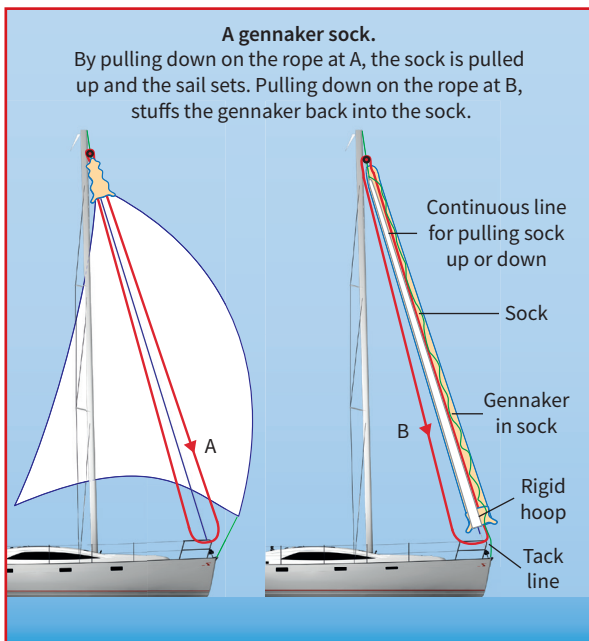


1. Unfurl the genoa.
2. When everyone is ready, the helmsman bears away onto a run.
3. Pull in the sheet and grab it between the sail and the deck, getting ready to pull like crazy as the sail comes down.
4. Release the guy and then the halyard. The spinnaker will swing behind the mainsail and start to drop.
5. Pull the sail inboard and stuff it down the hatch.
6. When it's all below unclip the sheets and guys and halyard and tidy them up. Then clip on and go forward and put the pole away. On your way aft bring back the spinnaker bag.
7. Finally, go below and pack the spinnaker into the bag.

## MORE ON GENNAKERS

### The sock

Often, a gennaker is hoisted from a sock. The diagram shows how this works.



### Hoisting



1. Get the sail on deck in its sock.
2. Attach the tack line.
3. Attach the sheets.

4. Attach the top of the sock to the halyard and pull up the sail in its sock.
5. The helmsman bears away onto a run.
6. Pull the sock line so the sock rises and the gennaker is exposed.
7. Trim the sheet to set the gennaker.

## Gybing



As the mainsail is gybed, let off the old gennaker sheet and pull in the new one.

## Dropping the gennaker



1. Turn onto a run.
2. Ease out the gennaker sheet a bit.
3. Pull down on the sock line so the gennaker is stuffed into the sock.
4. When it's doused, lower the whole thing onto the deck, unclip it and take it below.

