

Here are some often asked questions about sailing. The "answers" might be of interest to you.

Question 1: How do I know when I am overshooting?

Answer: Overshooting is a very common problem. Its symptoms are a clogged feeling on the boat with the boat finding acceleration in gusts. It is caused by too much sheet tension on the sail which can cause the leech to close too much, hooking the leech to windward.

To detect overshooting two tell-tales should be placed at the top of the sail e.g. in the second to top panel, 50% back. If you are overshooting the leeward tell-tale will refuse to flow. When trimming both main and jib sheet tension is governed by this tell-tale.

Question 2: How can I depower in strong winds?

Answer: Depowering should follow a logical sequence based on need and convenience. All depowering should do is flatten the sail, thus, reducing the power the rig is developing. The sequence I use is:-

- i) luff tension - more luff tension - flatten the sail. In heavy weather (really heavy), pull on the luff tension as far as you can then another two inches. Not only does luff tension induce bend in the mast, thus, flattening the sail, but it keeps it there if you have thrown the main sheet.
- ii) foot tension: If you are over powered you certainly don't need bag in the bottom of the sail - pull it out.
- iii) traveller: If you are heeling over easily and not moving forward quickly, it's a sure sign that the traveller needs to go out. (2" at a time). Give the crew the traveller sheet and let them work it. Letting the traveller out will reduce your height, but the extra speed footing will move then compensate it. If the wind drops and you need more power get the crew to pull the traveller in.
- iv) mast rotation. In these conditions, mast rotation would still be about 45° . If you still need to depower, pull it in to about 15° . This will allow the sail to flatten even further because the mainsheet will induce even more mast bend.

Question 3: Every time I go sailing I have trouble getting off the beach.

Answer: Yes, I've seen it. You must sail free of the beach with-
out much mainsheet or jibsheet. If you sheet in too much whilst your rudders and centreboards aren't in you will get lots of weather helm. Point up into the wind and drift sideways. Everybody who has trouble getting off the beach always has the main strapped in hard. This is the cause of the problem.