

Do's and Don'ts

- Do use a whisker pole to control the headsail in downwind sailing conditions.
- Do make sure all sheets are slack before setting, telescoping or taking down a pole.
- Do keep the pole level.
- Do keep the ends clean and dry.
- Do store the poles in a manner that protects them from the weather if possible.
- Do not use a pole in a manner that pulls on the ends. All poles are designed for compression loads not tension. The ends are extremely strong if used properly.
- Do not use the pole as a lever.
- Do not attempt to jibe a whisker pole.
- Do not attempt to retract a pole under load. You will not be able to handle any pole under load and can injure yourself.
- Do not use a whisker pole (telescoping) as a spinnaker pole. They are not designed for the tack loads a conventional spinnaker can produce.
- Do not fly a pole at angles that can subject the end fittings to loading in directions not intended. This could damage the end fittings.
- When flying any pole, **do not** pull it back against a stay or let it fall forward against the headstay. Any pole, no matter what it's size can be bent or severely damaged if allowed to hit your standing rigging.
- Do not attempt to return a bent or dented pole for warranty.

Tips on Use

Whisker poles are set when the apparent wind angles are such that the mainsail begins to blanket the headsail. This happens at different times on various boats but will always occur whenever you are sailing close to downwind. **Wing-on-wing sailing is not an easy point of sail without the use of a whisker pole.** The jib tends to drift from side to side, unable to maintain its fullness and boat speed suffers along with the thrill of sailing.

When the pole is set, holding the headsail out on the opposite side of the main in clear air, there is a very noticeable increase in efficiency and boat speed. **Sailing wing-on-wing is much easier than handling a spinnaker and takes less people to handle equipment.**

With the properly sized whisker pole, end fittings, mast attachment and rigging, downwind sailing becomes very easy, efficient and enjoyable.

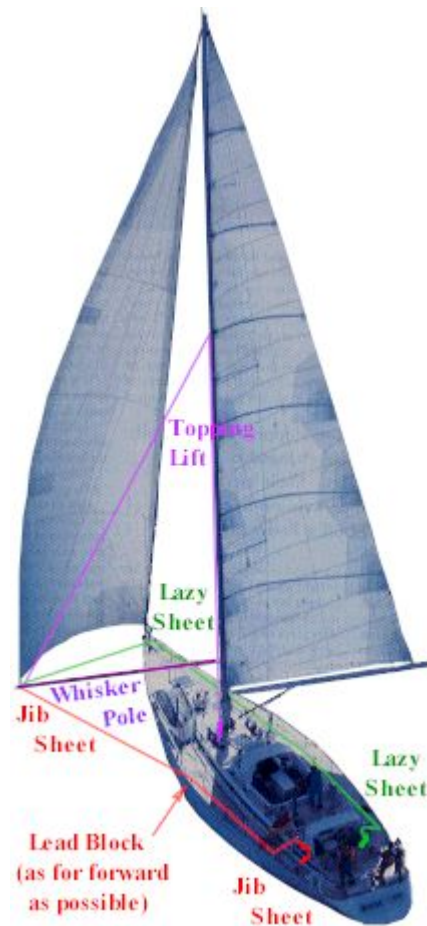
Boats larger than 22 feet may require a topping lift. The topping lift is a line coming from a point up the mast and holds the outboard end of the pole up. If you **do not have a specific topping lift** you can **use an extra** jib halyard, staysail halyard or the unused spinnaker halyard. Note that in using the spinnaker halyard, the lead from the top of the mast may chafe on the headstay. If this happens, do not use the spinnaker halyard for long periods as it will ultimately fail, rig a separate topping lift.

Whisker poles usually do not need a downhaul. If, on your boat, you experience a lot of upward lift on the whisker pole, try moving your sheet leads farther forward. This will cause the sheet to go up at a higher angle and help hold the pole down. If the pole still wants to "sky", then check the inboard end height. If it is set too low the pole will want to lift. If the pole still won't stay down, you can take the lazy sheet (the unused sheet) and hook it over a forward cleat. **Do not cleat it off**, just use the cleat to turn the sheet aft, then take up on the lazy sheet from the cockpit. This will hold the pole down as well as forward on most boats, eliminating the need to rig a separate downhaul.

The jib sheet should be set thru the end fitting without any twist or loops around the end of the pole. Do not attempt to set the end fitting jaws directly into the clew of the sail (the grommet or eye of the sail itself). This will cause a twist in the sail which could damage the end fitting and sail as well. **The sheet should run freely thru the end fitting. Do not attach it to the bowline at the jib clew.** The reason is that if you need to turn the boat in an emergency or to avoid an object in the water, **the sail must be allowed to blow out** around the headstay. If the sheet is not allowed to **run freely** thru the end fitting, the pole could be forced against the stay and **bent**.

If the pole is to be set for long periods, utilizing a **separate after-guy and fore-guy** offers a certain degree of convenience. These are independent of the jib sheet itself and **only control the movement of the pole**. This setup is **ideal for the cruising sailor with furling sails**. Properly set, the pole does not need to be touched in the event of a squall or when you want to shorten the sail. Because the pole is secure, the sail can be furled from the safety of the cockpit while leaving the whisker pole in place. This **works well for short handed sailing** because you can deal with the pole when it is safe and convenient.

Do not attempt to jibe a whisker pole. They must be taken down and reset on the new tack. The reason for this is that, unlike spinnakers, the headsail must pass inside the fore-triangle. With the pole attached near the cleat to what will soon be the wrong jib sheet, and considering the length of the pole and the sail foot, it becomes an almost impossible situation. If the pole is attached to a mast car, you may be able to haul it up, drawing the pole in far enough to pass the outboard end inside the headstay. This only works if the pole length is not considerably longer than the "J" dimension of the boat and there are no staysail stays or baby stays in the way.



Do not attempt to retract or telescope a pole under load. You will not be able to handle any pole under load and can injure yourself. Be sure all sheets are slack before setting, telescoping or taking down a pole.

Whisker poles are flown with their jaws facing down. Unlike spinnaker poles, having the jaw down does two things: it allows for proper attachment to the topping lift and easier detachment of the jib sheet. On a whisker pole the sheet tends to fall down and out.

Whisker poles do not have bridles. The topping lift should always go directly to the outboard end. Whisker poles also **do not have full length trip lines** (unless they are fixed length). Trip lines on a telescoping pole get in the way when the pole is used at any position short of its full length.