

# Troubleshooting Sail Trim

SAILING TO WINDWARD

Problem	Reason	Cure
Boat won't point	Sail shape too full	Flatten sails.
	Draft too far forward	Adjust draft to 45% back in genoa, 50% back in main.
	Jib sheet lead too far outboard	Move genoa lead to inboard track or barber haul clew.
Lee helm	Helmsman steering too full	Come up until leeward genoa telltales stream.
	Sails unbalanced	Move traveler to windward until top leech tell-tale breaks occasionally.
Boat speed down (and making leeway)	Helmsman pinching	Head off. Keep windward genoa telltales streaming.
	Sails over-trimmed	Ease jib sheet. Move sheet lead outboard. Ease main traveler.
	Sails too flat (not enough power)	Increase draft in main and jib.
	Leeches fluttering	Tighten leech lines.
	Leeches severely cupped	Ease leech lines.
Excessive weather helm (constant rudder angle of more than 5°)	Main over-trimmed (Note: it is faster to set with forward portion of main lifting than with too much weather helm.)	If all main leech telltales are breaking, ease traveler. If top main leech telltales are breaking, ease mainsheet or vang.
	Boat heeled excessively (too much sail)	Reef main. Reduce headsail.

CLOSE REACHING

Excessive weather helm	Main over-trimmed	Ease traveler. Ease mainsheet.
	Genoa over-trimmed	Move genoa sheet lead outboard. Ease genoa until leeward telltales stream.
	Boat heeled excessively (too much sail)	Reef main. Reduce headsail.
Boat speed down	Sails over-trimmed	Ease genoa until leeward telltales stream. Ease main traveler. Ease mainsheet.
	Not enough sail	Unreef main. Increase headsail size.

BROAD REACHING

Boat yaws (drives both to windward and leeward)	Sails over-twisted	Increase tension on boom vang. Move genoa lead forward. Check telltales.
	Genoa over-trimmed, closing slot and killing main	Pole out genoa clew to leeward. Adjust height of whisker pole so that genoa telltales stream.
Boat speed down	Sails not trimmed properly	Check telltales on genoa and main. Pole out genoa clew. Check draft of main and genoa.
	Not enough sail	Shake out reef. Increase headsail size. Set spinnaker
Boat broaches out of control to windward	Spinnaker sheet over-trimmed	Ease sheet.
	Too much sail	Get spinnaker down. Reef or furl main. Reduce headsail size.

RUNNING DOWNWIND

Boat speed down	Genoa not drawing	Wing out genoa on whisker pole opposite main.
	Not enough sail	Set spinnaker, or set second headsail opposite winged-out genoa. Ease main and tighten vang.
Boat speed still down	Wind gone light	Tack downwind, keeping apparent wind about 20° off the stern.
Boat steers wildly, wants to heel to windward	Spinnaker pole over-trimmed	Ease pole forward to get spinnaker more in front of boat.
Boat rolls heavily and steers wildly	Sails overtwisted for conditions, amplifying oscillations	Increase vang tension and trim mainsheet slightly. Drop outboard end of whisker pole and trim genoa sheet slightly.
	Spinnaker oscillating wildly	Move spinnaker sheet lead block forward to tighten leech. Drop pole end to tighten luff. Trim main as above.
Boat broaches out of control	Too much sail	Douse spinnaker. Reef main. Set small headsail.
	Too much unbalanced sail	Deep reef mainsail and wing out jib, or furl main and set two small headsails wing and wing.
Spinnaker hourglasses	Spinnaker fills, out of control, while improperly set	Ease halyard and pull down on luff and leech until twist rises and disappears and sail fills.