

RYA Dinghy Sailing Level 1 – Start Sailing

Course Duration: 2 days (approximately 16 hours)

Pre-course requirements: None

Minimum age: Centre dependent (usually 8+)

Assumed knowledge: None

Course ratio: 1 instructor to 3 students (maximum 6 per instructor in double-handers)

Course Aim

To provide a basic understanding of how to sail in all directions, including an awareness of launching and recovery. By the end of the course, participants should be able to sail in light winds under supervision.

Course Outline / Programme

Day 1 – Getting Afloat & Basic Boat Handling

Morning Session

- **Introduction & Safety Briefing**
 - Welcome and course overview
 - Centre facilities and emergency procedures
 - Personal kit and buoyancy aids
 - Weather awareness and safety afloat
- **Rigging & Launching**
 - Parts of the boat and basic terminology
 - Rigging and de-rigging a dinghy
 - Launching and recovery techniques
 - Boat balance and control ashore

Afternoon Session

- **On-Water Session 1: Getting Moving**
 - Basic controls: steering, mainsheet, tiller extension
 - Sailing across the wind (reaching)
 - Turning (tacking and gybing)
 - Stopping and controlling speed
 - Coming alongside
- **Debrief & Feedback**

- Review of the day's learning
 - Discussion of common issues
 - Weather check and plan for Day 2
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Day 2 – Building Confidence & Independence

Morning Session

- **On-Water Session 2: Sailing Practice**
 - Launching and recovery unaided (with supervision)
 - Sailing to a point and returning
 - Introduction to the 5 Essentials (Balance, Trim, Sail Setting, Centreboard, Course Made Good)
 - Wind awareness and no-go zone review

Afternoon Session

- **On-Water Session 3: Manoeuvres & Mini Circuits**
 - Tacking on a reach and close-hauled sailing
 - Gybing downwind safely
 - Basic triangle course sailing
 - Man overboard (dry run) exercise
 - **Course Completion & Next Steps**
 - Personal debrief and feedback
 - Explanation of RYA Level 1 certificate criteria
 - Introduction to RYA Level 2 – *Basic Skills*
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Assessment

Continuous assessment by the instructor based on practical performance and understanding.
No formal written test.

Outcome

By the end of the course, students will:

- Understand basic sailing techniques and controls
- Be able to sail a dinghy in light winds under supervision
- Be familiar with launching and recovery
- Be ready to progress to **RYA Level 2 – Basic Skills**