

RYA Dinghy Sailing – Day Sailing

Course Duration: 2 days (approximately 16 hours)

Pre-course requirements: RYA Seamanship Skills (or equivalent experience)

Minimum age: Centre dependent (usually 14+)

Assumed knowledge: Confident dinghy sailor capable of handling a boat in moderate conditions

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

Course Aim

To equip sailors with the skills and knowledge to plan and undertake day sails or longer passages in dinghies. The focus is on passage planning, navigation, pilotage, weather awareness, and self-sufficiency afloat.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to plan and complete a day sail confidently, managing navigation and seamanship under varying conditions.

Course Outline / Programme

Day 1 – Planning and Preparation for a Day Sail

Morning Session

- **Course Introduction & Safety Briefing**
 - Course overview and objectives
 - Safety, equipment, and emergency procedures
 - Review of Seamanship Skills and passage planning principles
 - Understanding weather forecasts and tidal information
- **Shore-Based Session: Passage Planning Fundamentals**
 - Chart and tidal stream interpretation
 - Route selection and identification of hazards
 - Time, speed, and distance calculations
 - Choosing suitable launch and landing sites

Afternoon Session

- **On-Water Session 1: Short Passage Practice**
 - Rigging and preparation for extended sailing
 - Use of a chart afloat and pilotage in familiar waters
 - Practising navigation by landmarks and transits
 - Lunch stop planning and anchoring or mooring practice

- Return passage and debrief on navigation accuracy
 - **Debrief & Review**
 - Assessing the passage plan
 - Evaluating boat handling and time management
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Day 2 – Extended Day Sail & Independent Decision Making

Morning Session

- **Shore-Based Session: Weather and Route Review**
 - Weather and tide updates
 - Refining passage plan and contingencies
 - Communication and safety checks
- **On-Water Session 2: Full Day Sail**
 - Execution of planned passage
 - Maintaining course and position awareness
 - Dealing with changes in wind, tide, and conditions
 - Lunch or rest stop at a distant location
 - Crew coordination and navigation checks

Afternoon Session

- **On-Water Session 3: Return Passage & Advanced Seamanship**
 - Passage completion under changing conditions
 - Towing, reefing, and emergency drills as required
 - Efficient boat handling after extended time afloat
 - **Course Completion & Debrief**
 - Full passage review and personal feedback
 - Discussion of future development (Coastal Sailing, Racing, Instructor pathways)
 - Certificate presentation
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Assessment

Continuous practical assessment by the instructor. Students must demonstrate:

- Competent planning and execution of a day sail
- Sound navigation and passage-making skills

- Good awareness of tides, weather, and safety
 - Efficient use of seamanship and decision-making afloat
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Outcome

By the end of the course, students will:

- Plan and undertake a day sail with confidence
- Use navigational techniques to maintain position awareness
- Make safe and efficient decisions afloat
- Demonstrate strong seamanship and independence
- Be ready to progress to **RYA Sailing with Spinnakers, Performance Sailing**, or **Instructor training**