

RYA Day Skipper Sail – what's in it for me?

We give you the lowdown - what's involved, why do it, what will I learn?

Imagine being capable and confident enough to take your friends and family out on a yacht for a day, a weekend or even on holiday.

RYA Day Skipper is a qualification which enables you to safely take charge of a 30-45ft sail cruising yacht and its crew by day in familiar waters.

There's no getting away from it – passing involves some work, some practice and some dedication. But RYA Day Skipper is your ticket to freedom.



It shows charter companies that you have enough knowledge and practical experience to take their vessels out safely.

And your Day Skipper qualifies you to apply for your ICC (International Certificate of Competence), which means you can charter a yacht abroad – a whole new chapter of adventure.

So what's involved, and how do I do it?

RYA Day Skipper Sail is a two-fold qualification, with practical and theory tuition.

First there is the [RYA Day Skipper Shorebased Course](#). Generally this is delivered in the classroom, but it can be delivered via an online learning course with support from instructors. It takes around 40-hours to complete with two paper assessments at the end.

Subjects covered include safety, collision regulations, navigation (on paper and electronically) weather, passage planning, the marine environment and the theory behind how a yacht sails. By learning all the theory prior to joining the practical course, you are much better placed to get the most from the Day Skipper practical course.

Next, assuming you have some sailing experience (preferably 5 days at sea) you can go boating!

The practical [RYA Day Skipper Course](#) takes five days on a sailing yacht. It can be taken in one block or split it over two or three weekends.

What will I learn? How does it differ from RYA Competent Crew?



Once on board, you'll cover all aspects of yacht sailing; how to trim sails, plan a passage, to moor and anchor safely. If you have previously taken an RYA Competent Crew course, these tasks will feel familiar. The main difference with RYA Day Skipper is that you'll be making the key decisions on everything – from what to do in an emergency, where and how to berth the yacht, to when dinner should be served.

You'll learn how to delegate jobs effectively and encourage and motivate crew members when needed. You will also be in charge of all aspects of safety management on board, from equipment and the yacht to the well-being of everyone on board.

Why should I take the course?

The best part about learning in a controlled environment is that there is an experienced RYA instructor on board ensuring your safety, while guiding and encouraging you to practice your manoeuvres and develop your own management style.

Living on board with other would-be skippers for the duration of the course brings a great sense of comradeship, team spirit and shared adventure that often creates life-long bonds.

By the end you will be a confident and capable skipper, able to assess situations and make qualified decisions for the benefit of the yacht and its crew.

What's the best route to RYA Day Skipper?

There are lots of ways in – you may have gained plenty of sailing experience with your club, or perhaps you have helped crew on friends' boats. But taking RYA Competent Crew – a five-day course where you learn how to be an active crew member, assisting with the day to day running of a sailing yacht – is excellent grounding.

Nick Rich took RYA Competent Crew with Just Sailing in Genoa in August and is now looking forward to taking RYA Day Skipper.

He explained, "I've gained a sense of all the things I need to learn before I go near taking the family out on our own: marina manoeuvres, much more practice at man overboard, much more practice sailing in different winds, chart work, radio usage, sail setting, rigging, motor usage, first aid, much more thinking about what if X goes wrong scenarios, and so on. But that is, in part, what the Day Skipper qualifications are for: and, crucially, I now have a structure to follow."

RYA Chief Instructor Vaughan Marsh, "RYA Day Skipper is a challenging and fun course which comes with fantastic rewards. When you've had enough tuition that feel able to pack up and head off on a trip with your friends and family – that's when the hard work really pays off."



Find out more about [Day Skipper](#) or other courses within the [Sail Cruise](#) scheme.