

Sea sickness

I'm an instructor/ commercial skipper and get 100+ crews a season... from day sailing to offshore training ... thus a reasonable exposure to coping with the sea sickness problem.

I've understood and suggest that we have 2 sources of sea sickness:

1. Motion sickness - middle ear balance organ that says after a prolonged period of rollercoaster movements - lets go sit under a tree somewhere stable OR let's assume we're going to die and get out all the food and drink we've ever consumed...
2. Adrenaline sickness - reptile dumb fight or flight response that our brains sometimes use to be clear about how our surroundings may not be good for us. (Example car sickness- driver is braking late, is too close to the car in front, road position off... your subconscious mind says get ready for the crash... adrenaline speeds up your response rate...feeds your muscles with lots to help you run & fight.... but you just sit there... adrenaline buildup eventually leads to vomiting, which in turn adds to your negative experience... some more adrenaline is released and round and round we go.)

The understanding that comes from identifying which is the source of your sickness, I suggest really helps to deal with it.

Motion sickness - prevention

Depends on how your boat moves, how long your exposed and what type of sailing you do...comfort / racing etc..

Personal Goal no.1 get your sea legs sorted ASAP

Bend your knees a little more so when the boat moves underneath you your head remains level with the horizon... like the cooker is gimballed you want your head to remain balanced despite the yachts movement. If you sit down or go below deck you loose sight of the horizon and the wind and other references and simply follow the ships movement... middle ear gets

shaken....

Top tip.... I find that if I don't let crew members sit down too much, in the first few hours of sailing they quickly get their sea legs sorted out. (i.e. looking like Bamby's taking first steps). I encourage kids games like "no hands" looking forward, backwards eyes closed one leg...etc.

Eventually you must sit down and relax but as soon as you feel that you need a break get up and let your middle ear rest with some stable time. Helming often helps as you tend to stand up and look out at the balance of the yacht with the wind and sea...

Adrenaline Sickness - prevention

Mindfulness is really the key to dealing with this. Your mind is kinda looking out for you...but it's sometimes not really good at new situations or comfortable with you taking risks... Search your mind and Identify what you are really scared about... drowning... lack of control...the crackers skipper... Fundamentally, you need to take charge of what your worried about and answer your concerns properly or your subconscious mind (not the right words) will take charge of your adrenaline...

Top tip... historically all safety briefs just before departure have required the teacher to scare the **** out of the crews and generally getting adrenaline levels to new heights... reflect on the goals of your safety briefing. Suggest making a suitable risk assessment part of your joining instructions and encourage crews to talk through concerns in advance.

I've had 2 crew seasick in the past 5 years.... and I'm not convinced alcohol was not really the problem...good luck

Watch out for dehydration.... drink lots of water and make sure that you're crew can comfortably use the heads.... I've seen ladies go all day rather than use the heads 🤔

If you like drugs, and why should you not....then these are the options I

understand are worth checking out:

Homeopathy style.

Ginger gravol is available as a transdermal patch to put behind your ear, two days before you leave the dock. Or Ginger tablets. Then Ginger tea and lots of staying on your feet and gimballed as above. Try the pressure bands also. I heard also that taking strong vitamin C supplements for a week or so before helps.

Western medicine.

scolpolamine (Transderm) patches are what they give you for surgery and what will likely help you on a yacht. Make sure to wash your hands extremely well (scrub under nails and all surfaces) after applying the patch, and avoid touching your eyes. The ingredients causes pupillary dilation and will effect your vision. It's transient, but takes up to 24 hours to resolve and can be unpleasant... expensive and not suitable for prolonged use.

Stugeron 25mg works like a charm for the majority of my sailing friends, is cheap but maybe is a UK product and like many drugs is not effective if mixed with alcohol and if not taken well in advance of your sea time.

Demenhydrinat with Caffeine is the European best in class equivalent.