



# Check in for winter

Complete this checklist of more than 40 tips, from masthead to keel, and you and your boat will sleep more soundly this winter, says Toby Hodges

## RIG

You can leave the mast up or down. If you're leaving it stepped, do the checks aloft while still in the water – it's easier and safer.

### 1. Standing rigging

- Check sheaves, swages, split-pins masthead lights and spreader mounts. (Tip: look for wear and tear – signs of corrosion, cracked tangs, worn/broken pins.)
- Sluice any moving parts with fresh water (sheaves, furling drums, bottlescrews)

### 2. Running rigging

- Substitute halyards with messenger lines to prolong life
- Inspect all running rigging for chafe
- Wash halyards. (Tip: Fill up your tender to wash them in and add some handwashing (Dreft) detergent.)

### 3. Sails

- Wash and dry thoroughly
- Remove, roll up and store in a dry place – or consider sending to sailmakers for valet service



**ABOVE:** Keep an eye out for wear or cracks.  
**BELOW:** Check for chafe on running rigging



Date RIG completed: .....

Memos for fitting out/relaunch: .....

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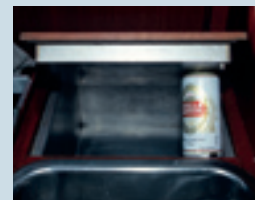
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## BELOW DECKS

Damp and condensation is the interior's enemy in winter and the key is to try to minimise the damaging effects.

### 1. Moisture measures

- Clean boat (salt is hygroscopic, attracting moisture especially in poorly ventilated areas)
- Remove any cardboard or tin cans including all food
- Remove upholstery and bedding
- Leave all doors (fridge and cooker), lockers, compartments, etc. open



**ABOVE:** Prop the fridge open and all other lockers to prevent rotting odours.  
**RIGHT:** Take home all food stores (cardboard and tin) which dissolve or rust



**ON DECK**

**1. Lockers**

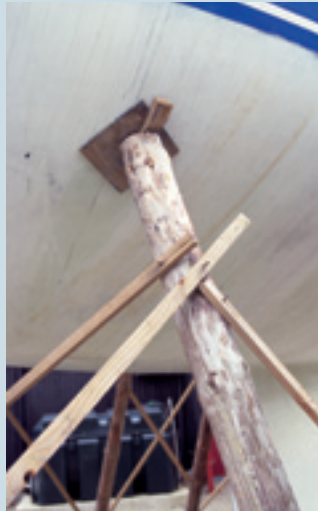
- Clear out everything not needed
- If possible leave ajar or open for ventilation
- Take home any removable brightwork (such as tiller, locker lid, etc.) to save your varnish

**2. Navigation lights**

- Check all are working and for any water ingress
- Remove bulbs and lubricate (Vaseline) terminals

**3. Shore safety**

- Check safety of chocks including neighbouring boats. Don't tie tarpaulin/canvas covers to chocks – it's been known for gales to pull them out.
- Remove liferafts, lifebuoys, danbuoys, tenders, oars and store securely
- Flush the tender's outboard with fresh water and take to a marine engineer to be serviced and winterised before the end of the season



**ABOVE: How safe are your shores and others nearby? LEFT: Is the outboard due a service? Flush out regardless**



**Date ON DECK completed:** .....

**Memos for fitting out/relaunch:**  
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- Dry bilges thoroughly. Leave an absorbent pad/sock or even a couple of nappies to soak up condensation
- If you're connected to shore power, put a de-humidifier onboard

**2. Plumbing**

- Drain all pipes, pumps, water tanks and the calorifier to prevent freezing (if water tank is flexible, consider removing and taking home)
- Flush lots of water through heads plus cooking oil/fairy liquid to lubricate
- Drain sea toilet and connecting hoses
- If fitted, flush holding tank through thoroughly and add some 'Blue' chemical
- Disconnect hoses from skin fittings to let them breathe

**3. Batteries**

- If you have a smart charger and mains power, or solar panel, keep plugged in
- Otherwise, disconnect batteries, check electrolyte level and take home (if manageable)
- Float charge once a month
- Coat terminals in Vaseline – and all other exposed terminals from electronics/instruments



**Grease battery terminals and drain tanks and calorifier**

**Leaving a de-humidifier to drain directly into the sink will combat damp**



**Date BELOW DECKS completed:** .....

**Memos for fitting out/relaunch:**  
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**MECHANICS**

**1. Cooling system**

- Replace fresh cooling water with antifreeze/water mix
- Drain raw water and remove impeller (prevents blades distorting)
- Check anti-syphon valves if applicable – wash through if clogged
- Plug air inlet and exhaust outlet with oil-soaked rag to prevent dirt and moisture ingress

**2. Fuel**

- Fill fuel tanks to prevent condensation. Add some bactericide (helps eliminate 'bug' and water contamination)
- Check secondary fuel filter for any water/sediment
- Change primary filter and bleed system ready for next season

**3. Engine**

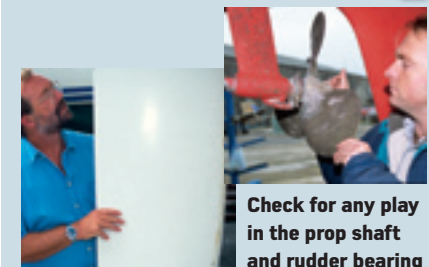
- Change engine oil and filter to prevent acidic waste deposits. Run engine in both gears to distribute oil
- Change gearbox oil (make a note of date).
- Spray engine with WD40 and/or leave cloth over engine to minimise condensation
- Turn the engine over without actually starting it on each visit – free air inlets first



**WD40 wards off condensation**

**4. Appendages**

- Give the rudder a shake in all directions to check for any play in the bearings – and check for play in the prop shaft
- Monitor the lift out. Check for weeping at the keel join as she grounds – a sign that the keel bolts may need tightening



**Check for any play in the prop shaft and rudder bearing**

**Date ENGINE CARE completed:** .....

**Memos for fitting out/relaunch:**  
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