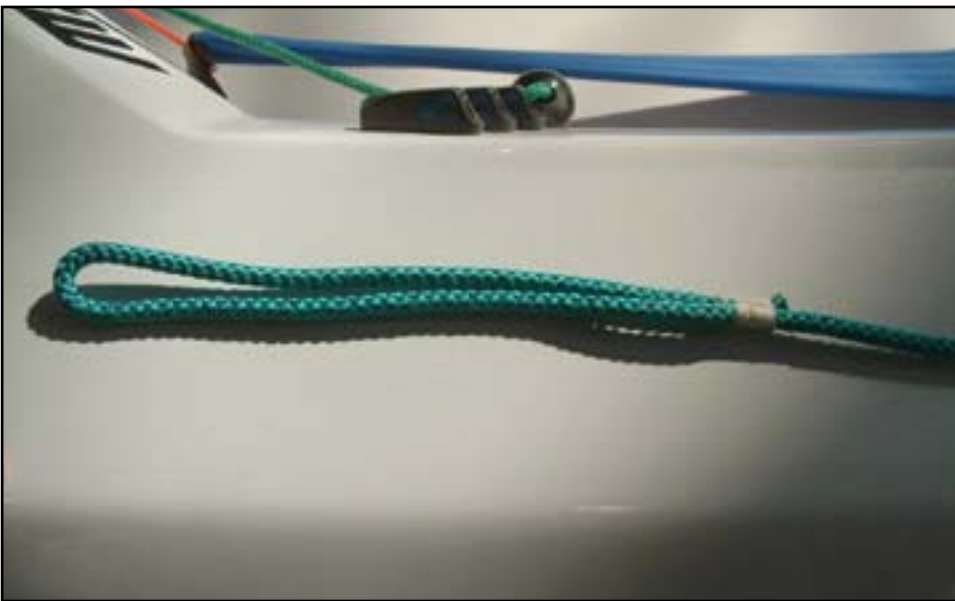




A Safe Idea

We recently had a request from an owner who had been racing in very cold water and had experienced three capsize in short succession in very heavy air. After the third capsize, he found himself tiring from the cold and surprised to find he could not get himself up on the board to right the boat. He eventually had to accept assistance.

As someone who also often enjoys sailing alone the thought occurred to him that a similar situation in those circumstances could be dangerous. Yet all he really needed was a way to get himself upon the board without expending huge amounts of energy - particularly with the amount of (now wet) clothing required to keep warm. The question was raised could he attach a strip of grab rail on top of the deck somewhere in the area between the traveller and the centreboard.



After some discussion at the recent Midwinters it was generally thought that there should be a better solution that did not require fasteners and did not end up on the deck where a second person would normally sit. Ian Bruce has proposed this solution which is simply a variation on something that Frank Bethwaite has been doing in Australia for 30 years!



It consists of a pouch of softish material (sail bag or sail cover material) that is sewn up on three sides and which, flat, measures 2 1/4 x 9 inches. It is sewn up then turned inside out to have the seam inside. A 3/4" wide piece of velcro loop is sewn for the full length. See top picture.

About 8 ft of 5/16" rope with a good texture is looped at one end, see centre picture, with loop big enough to take your foot in sailing boots! There is a snap hook or shackle on the other end - the picture at left shows a Ronstan carabine hook. The hook is attached to either the front or back deck strap of the forward hiking strap. Notice in the two photos that the ends are whipped. If this is done it reduces, considerably, the size of the pouch!



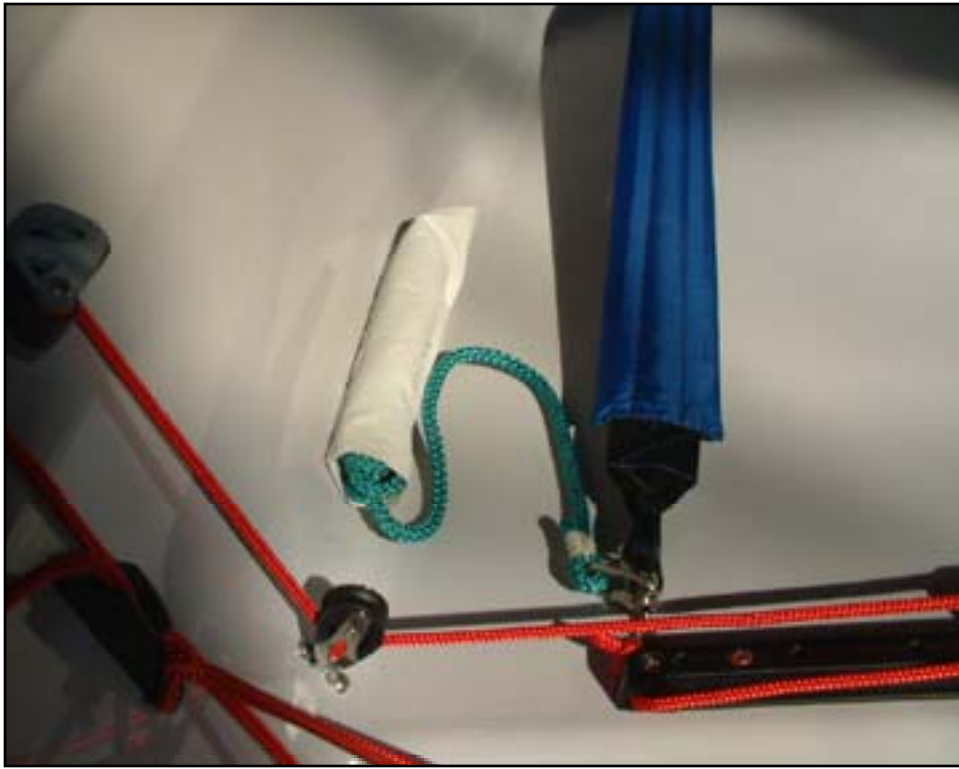
From the deck strap, the rope goes up and over the gunwale as shown at left.



Once over the gunwale, it goes into the pouch which is attached by means of a strip of self adhesive Velcro "hook" permanently adhered to the underside the gunwale. The photo shows the pouch with the rope completely inserted.



A variation on the above might be to leave the loop hanging out of the pouch for easier access. If the pouch is not too large, the rope will stay tucked in. We are recommending a fairly thick rope with some good texture as when hands are cold, a small line would not be pleasant.



In light air, when you might be wanting to heel the boat over to the point where the gunwale could be in the water on the run, remove the pouch from under the gunwale and attach it to a second piece of Velcro hook on the sides of the tanks



“View” from the water when capsized. Even if really tired and unable to reach straight up to the pouch, you can hang off the gunwale at the bow and work your way along the gunwale until you come to the pouch.



The actual length of the rope is something that each person will have to find out for themselves. It should be low enough in the water that you can get your foot in relatively easily. Then, when you stand up, you should have easy access to the board. You may not even have to get on the board!

The draft rules include the provision for this safety device. If you have never sailed in really cold water you have no idea how fast you can tire!