

Marlinspike Seamanship

By Ted Walsh

The Make-and-Mend Bag

Because we aspire to be as self-sufficient as possible on our boat, we carry an assortment of tool kits, rigging bags, ready bags, ditch bags, and spare parts, but my make-and-mend bag is the one that I reach for most often. Whether the job is patching a small tear in a sail, fixing a worn splice, splicing new line, whipping the end of a line, stropping a block, or repairing a piece of clothing, this is going to be the one bag that has most of what I need to do the job ready at hand.

If you do any cruising in your Friendship, or even the occasional overnight trip, you might want to have a make-and-mend bag on board. I know many of you do carry such a thing, but if you are not sure what one is, think of it as a first aid kit for your sails, running rigging, awnings, sail covers, seat cushions, or indeed, anything on board that is made of cloth or rope.

The contents are pretty basic, and can vary depending on what you feel you can confidently repair on your own.

Some basic ingredients:

- Sail-maker's #3 waxed twine
- Marline
- Regular twine
- A tube of sail-makers needles
- A sail-maker's stitching palm
- Some patches of sail material
- A fid
- A hollow fid
- A spare knife
- A chunk of sail-makers wax

Some additional ingredients that I have found useful:

- Scraps of sail-makers leather
- Netting needles pre-wound with twine or marline
- Extra rolls of pvc tape



A make-and-mend bag can be incredibly simple and useful, or it can be a sophisticated example of the sail-maker's art. It is up to you how fancy yours is, but my advice would be to keep it small enough so that it is easy to grab when you need it, and you don't have to paw through piles of stuff when you need something out of it.

