

CREW WATCH

NOVEMBER 2023

THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION BEST PRACTICE
STAYING FIT AT SEA MAINTAINING YOUR FITNESS
BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ON BOARD ADVICE
HOMESICKNESS COPING STRATEGIES AND TIPS



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WELCOME TO THE LAST ISSUE OF CREW WATCH FOR 2023, WHERE WE FOCUS ON THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF SEAFARERS. WE BEGIN BY EMPHASISING THE IMPORTANCE OF STAYING PROPERLY HYDRATED. GIVEN THE STRENUOUS DEMANDS OF MARITIME WORK, MAINTAINING GOOD HYDRATION IS VITAL. DEHYDRATION CAN RESULT IN FATIGUE, HEADACHES, AND REDUCED COGNITIVE FUNCTION, ALL OF WHICH CAN NEGATIVELY IMPACT SAFETY AND JOB PERFORMANCE.

ON BOARD EXERCISE IS ANOTHER KEY ASPECT OF SEAFARERS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. WHILE IT MAY SEEM CHALLENGING DUE TO LIMITED SPACE, BUSY SCHEDULES, AND SHIFTING WORK PATTERNS, IT IS CRUCIAL FOR THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF THOSE SPENDING EXTENDED PERIODS AT SEA. WE SHARE PRACTICAL TIPS ON HOW TO INCORPORATE EXERCISE INTO LIFE ON BOARD.

SHIFTING OUR FOCUS, WE ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT. LIFE AT SEA INVOLVES CONSTANT CHANGE, WITH SEAFARERS SPENDING LENGTHY PERIODS ON BOARD. EACH CREW CHANGE BRINGS TOGETHER INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONALITIES, IDEALLY FOSTERING MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING. HOWEVER, WE OCCASIONALLY RECEIVE FEEDBACK AND INQUIRIES ON HOW TO HANDLE CONFLICTS AMONG SEAFARERS.

WE ALSO DELVE INTO THE CAUSES OF HOMESICKNESS, ITS IMPACT ON SEAFARERS, AND OFFER PRACTICAL TIPS ON EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES. IMPLEMENTING THESE STRATEGIES CAN HELP SEAFARERS MANAGE THE EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES OF HOMESICKNESS AND LEAD MORE FULFILLING LIVES AT SEA.

JESSIE DUNN
Editor



We appreciate your continued support and look forward to bringing you more insightful content in the coming year. As always, if you have any ideas or comments, please share them with us at: britanniacommunications@tindallriley.com
Your feedback is invaluable to us.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HYDRATION

FOR SEAFARERS, THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING HYDRATION LEVELS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. THE DEMANDING NATURE OF MARITIME WORK, OFTEN CONDUCTED IN CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENTS, MAKES IT ESSENTIAL FOR SEAFARERS TO STAY WELL-HYDRATED TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY, WELLBEING AND OVERALL JOB PERFORMANCE.

Dehydration can lead to a range of problems, including fatigue, headaches, and decreased cognitive function, which can impact a seafarer's ability to perform their duties safely and effectively.

The recommended daily water intake for **adult males is 2.5 litres**, while **females should aim for 2 litres**. Most of this water should come from drinks, with the remaining **30-40% from food**. It is also important to note that water is the best type of fluid to drink. **These guidelines serve as a baseline, but individual requirements may vary based on factors such as age, body composition, climate, and physical activity.**

SEAFARERS CAN ADOPT SEVERAL BEST PRACTICES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE HYDRATION:

- Consistently drink water throughout the day, even if you do not feel thirsty. Thirst is often a delayed indicator of dehydration
- Sip water rather than drinking lots of water in one go, to avoid it passing straight through you
- In addition to water, include beverages with electrolytes to replenish salts lost through sweating
- Pay attention to the colour of your urine; pale yellow indicates good hydration, while dark yellow or amber signals dehydration
- Limit the consumption of alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration
- Keep a reusable water bottle within reach to encourage regular water consumption.

The maritime work environment can significantly impact hydration levels. Extended periods of work, exposure to extreme temperatures, and physically demanding tasks can lead to increased fluid loss through sweating. Seafarers must be especially mindful of their hydration in these conditions and try to consume more fluids.

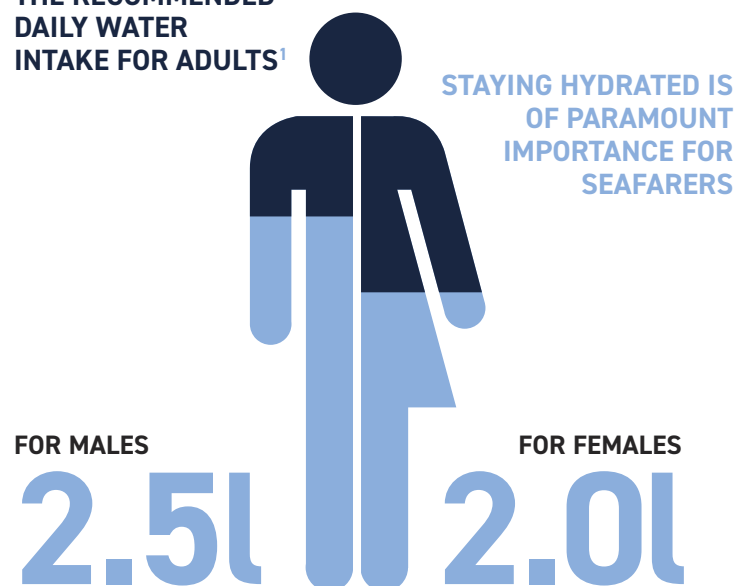
Working in warm climates or during the summer months requires extra attention to hydration. The body acclimatises to hot conditions over time, but during the adjustment period, seafarers are at a higher risk of heat-related illnesses and dehydration. Adequate rest, shade, and frequent hydration breaks are essential during this period to minimise the risks associated with excessive heat. Seafarers who are used to working in hot conditions tend to sweat more efficiently, while those who are not may lose more salt in their sweat. Adding a little extra salt in food can help, but salt tablets are not

recommended as they do not enter the body as quickly. Not drinking enough water can lead to kidney stones, which can be caused by a lack of water intake or excessive calcium in the diet. Foods high in calcium include beetroot, asparagus, soy products, and some nuts. It is important to maintain hydration levels to avoid these issues.

It is important to raise awareness around the significance of staying adequately hydrated; campaigns can help prevent these problems and improve crew members' overall wellbeing through education. The importance of having a crew with adequate knowledge on hydration can be shown in the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network's Quench Campaign whereby 16% of participants thought you could survive for a month without water. These participants consumed the least amount of water throughout the campaign, conversely, participants with the greatest knowledge on hydration, unsurprisingly, consistently consumed the most water.

Staying hydrated is of paramount importance for seafarers. Adequate water intake, adherence to guidelines, and adopting best practices are essential to ensure the well-being and performance of crew. The work environment, especially in warm conditions, can pose challenges to hydration, making it imperative to remain vigilant. By following these guidelines and staying informed through initiatives, seafarers can safeguard their health and safety while at sea.

THE RECOMMENDED DAILY WATER INTAKE FOR ADULTS¹



¹ European Food Information Council (EFUIC)

STAYING FIT AT SEA



ONE ASPECT OF MARITIME LIFE THAT IS ESSENTIAL IS STAYING FIT AND HEALTHY. EXERCISING ON BOARD A SHIP MAY SEEM LIKE A DAUNTING TASK DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, THE BUSY SCHEDULE AND CHANGING SHIFT PATTERNS BUT IT'S CRUCIAL FOR THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING OF THOSE WHO SPEND EXTENDED PERIODS AT SEA.

MENTAL HEALTH

Long periods at sea can be mentally challenging. Exercising can help release endorphins, reduce stress and improve overall mental health.



IMPROVED ALERTNESS

Physical activity increases blood flow and oxygen supply to the brain, leading to increased alertness and focus.



PHYSICAL STAMINA

Seafarers engage in physically demanding tasks. Therefore a high level of physical fitness is key to maintain the stamina required for these activities.



PREVENTING INJURIES

Maintaining strong muscles and strength through regular exercise can help prevent injuries caused by the movement of the ship and the physical demands of maritime work.



THE
IMPORTANCE
OF STAYING
FIT AT SEA

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR EXERCISING ON BOARD

If you are new or returning to exercise, suitable caution should be taken:

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Always keep in mind past and present health conditions and constantly review how you feel. If you feel dizzy or feel any muscular pain, then stop, particularly if there is any unusual pain or discomfort in the chest area.

STRETCHING IS KEY

Always stretch your muscles for several minutes before and after exercising. Stretching of muscles should be slow and gradual with no 'bouncing'.

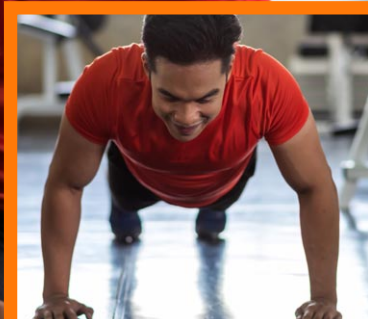
CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Establish a regular exercise routine and stick to it. Consistency is crucial for reaping the benefits of physical fitness.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Start your new exercise regime slowly and carefully, building up your physical tolerance and experience. You will not achieve your physical peak in one day, a week, or even a month. Building up exercise over weeks and months helps to avoid injury and as you become more fit, there can be a real sense of achievement and personal development, which drives you on to do more.

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CREATE A WORKOUT SPACE

If you are fortunate to be on a vessel with a gym, this can be a good place to socialise and also encourage each other, for example with lifting of weights. Utilise these spaces to maintain your fitness routine.

BODYWEIGHT AND CARDIO EXERCISES: If your ship does not have a workout area or equipment, bodyweight exercises are a good alternative. These include push-ups, squats, lunges and planks. If the ship's conditions allow, consider jogging or brisk walking on deck. Decks can become very slippery when wet so it is advisable to stick to designated walkways, which have non slip paint applied. In addition, always be cautious of doors and passageways when exercising on the deck.

STAY HYDRATED: Hydration is essential, especially in a maritime environment. Ensure you drink enough water before, during, and after your workouts and limit your alcohol intake. You can also read more on hydration on page 1.

EXERCISING ON BOARD A SHIP IS A VITAL ASPECT OF SEAFARING LIFE AND IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF SEAFARERS. BY INCORPORATING REGULAR EXERCISE INTO THEIR ROUTINES AND UTILISING THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES CREATIVELY, SEAFARERS CAN ENJOY THE NUMEROUS BENEFITS OF STAYING FIT AT SEA.





DEALING WITH BULLYING AND HARASSMENT ON BOARD A VESSEL

LIFE AT SEA IS MARKED BY CONSTANT CHANGE, WITH SEAFARERS SPENDING EXTENDED PERIODS ON BOARD, OFTEN BETWEEN FOUR TO ELEVEN MONTHS. EACH CREW CHANGE BRINGS TOGETHER INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONALITIES, IDEALLY FOSTERING MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING. NEVERTHELESS, THE CLUB OCCASIONALLY RECEIVES FEEDBACK AND ENQUIRIES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AMONG SEAFARERS.

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT CAN LEAD TO A RANGE OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES, FROM LOW STAFF MORALE TO POOR WORK PERFORMANCE, ABSENTEEISM, RESIGNATIONS, DISTRACTIONS, AND EVEN HEALTH AND SAFETY ACCIDENTS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THE TWO TERMS:

BULLYING typically involves a recurring pattern of conduct such as inflicting harm, intimidation, unjustified criticism, loss of confidence, verbal abuse, display of temper or possibly even humiliation. It is generally repetitive, intentional and exploits imbalances of power.


















HARASSMENT can be seen as a form of discrimination that manifests in unwanted, intimidating, or offensive behaviours aimed at individuals or groups. Unlike bullying, harassment does not always rely on power dynamics and may not be repetitive. It can take various forms, including sexual, racial or religious harassment.

Several factors contribute to bullying and harassment in the maritime industry, including power imbalances, stress, isolation and a lack of awareness. These issues need to be addressed to create a safer and more inclusive work environment.

By incorporating these preventive strategies into the maritime industry, a more respectful and safe working environment can be fostered, promoting the well-being and productivity of seafarers while emphasising professionalism and accountability. It sends a strong message that bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be met with serious consequences.

PREVENTIVE TIPS FOR SEAFARERS

Seafarers can also play a pivotal role in preventing bullying and harassment by following these recommendations:

-  Comprehend and adhere to the company's policies and procedures for handling complaints
-  Actively participate in company organised training on such issues
-  Identify and understand behaviours that are considered unacceptable and should be reported
-  Be vigilant in recognising early signs of bullying and harassment among fellow crew members, such as changes in behaviour, isolation, low morale or poor work performance
-  Report incidents of bullying or harassment, whether experienced personally or witnessed and follow the appropriate reporting protocols
-  Contact the Designated Person Ashore (DPA) or the relevant authorities ashore if you are dissatisfied with how a complaint was handled
-  Develop conflict resolution skills to address disagreements constructively
-  Show respect for the cultural diversity among fellow crew members to prevent misunderstandings
-  Utilise available resources and counselling when necessary
-  Learn and implement stress management techniques
-  Avoid using offensive language, intimidating words or criticism when working with other crew members
-  Avoid leering, rude gestures, touching, grabbing or other unnecessary bodily contact
-  Avoid spreading malicious rumours or insulting other crew members
-  Engage in on board buddying to provide support to victims and encourage them to report incidents without fear of retaliation
-  Understand and uphold individual rights as stipulated in national and international laws, including the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC)
-  Be aware of legal remedies available under the MLC or other relevant regulations
-  Seek assistance and support from seafarer organisations or other welfare bodies when needed.

Members requiring any further guidance are advised to contact the [Britannia Loss Prevention Department](#).

DEALING WITH HOMESICKNESS AT SEA



Dr Charlie Easmon



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THE LIFE OF A SEAFARER COMES WITH ITS OWN SET OF CHALLENGES AND HOMESICKNESS CAN BE ONE OF THEM. SPENDING MONTHS AT SEA CAN BE AN EXHILARATING AND FULFILLING EXPERIENCE, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE INCREDIBLY ISOLATING. MISSING HOME AND LOVED ONES CAN SOMETIMES ONLY BE CURED BY A RETURN HOME, BUT SEAFARERS DO NOT HAVE THIS LUXURY. HOMESICKNESS IS A COMMON AND POWERFUL EMOTION THAT MANY SEAFARERS GRAPPLE WITH ON LONG VOYAGES.

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES

Homesickness is a natural human response to being separated from one's familiar surroundings and loved ones. For seafarers, it can be triggered by several factors:

ISOLATION: Being at sea for extended periods often means limited social interaction. This isolation can intensify feelings of loneliness and homesickness.

MISSING LOVED ONES: Most individuals can cope with relatively short periods away from home, but the absence of family and friends can be one of the most significant triggers. Seafarers often miss important life events such as birthdays and other special occasions.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES: Being in unfamiliar cultures and environments can exacerbate feelings of homesickness, as seafarers might find it challenging to adapt to new customs and norms.

THE IMPACT OF HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness can have a profound impact on a seafarer's mental and emotional well-being. The emotional strain can affect their job performance, contributing to decreased concentration and productivity. Moreover, homesickness can lead to:

ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION: The constant longing for home and loved ones can cause anxiety and depression, which can further hinder a seafarer's ability to perform their duties.

PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES: Homesickness can manifest in physical symptoms such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and decreased appetite, impacting a seafarer's overall health.

DECREASED MORALE: Low morale and emotional distress can result in reduced job satisfaction, potentially affecting team dynamics on board.

COPING STRATEGIES FOR SEAFARERS

If you are feeling homesick, you need other distractions to maintain your mental, physical and spiritual welfare.

- 1 HOBBIES:** Embrace your time at sea as an opportunity to explore new hobbies or interests. Reading, exercising or learning a new skill can be a welcome distraction from homesickness.
- 2 MINDFULNESS:** Mindfulness exercises and meditation techniques can help you manage stress and anxiety.
- 3 CREATE A ROUTINE:** Establish a daily routine that gives structure to your days. This can include exercise, leisure activities, and self-care practices to maintain a healthy body and mind.
- 4 STAY CONNECTED:** In today's digital age, staying in touch with loved ones has never been easier. Utilise satellite communication, emails, and social media to maintain a connection with your family and friends. Regular conversations can provide a sense of closeness and comfort.
- 5 PROFESSIONAL HELP:** Sometimes, homesickness can become overwhelming, and seeking professional counselling or therapy can be beneficial. Many shipping companies provide access to mental health services for their crew members.

Homesickness is an emotional challenge that seafarers face during their time at sea, but it is not unbeatable. By understanding its causes and impact, and by implementing the coping strategies mentioned above, seafarers can better manage this natural emotional response. Staying connected with loved ones, creating routines, and building a support network are essential steps in navigating the emotional storm that is homesickness. In doing so, seafarers can lead fulfilling and successful lives while spending months at sea.



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