

**SAILING FIT**  
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Mind, Body, Boat

I don't know how many times I have heard something to this effect "If I only did well in a race then I would feel more motivated to keep sailing". To a small extent I can understand this, but for the most part I think it is all backwards! The motivation to practice and race needs to come from places other than the finish line. Once that happens then you will start being the first to cross that line.

Whether it's sailing or your fitness plan the goals you set for yourself need to be attainable yet challenging. There is no way that you are going pick up a dumbbell or use a smith squat machine perfectly the first time you ever use it. Some of you probably don't even know what a smith squat machine is! It may take you many times and many years before you are able to use weights correctly and in a way that gives you the most benefit. The same goes with sailing. While there are some exceptions to the rule most of you are not going to go out there rig your boat right and win the race the first time you try. It takes years of practice to learn to get your boat to go fast. Not only do you have to know how to sail it, you have to get your body, brain and the boat to work together.

It's like putting a puzzle together. Without each piece it is incomplete. If one is missing then the pieces don't fit together tightly. Let's look at some of the pieces we need to get the results we want. Mind, Body, Boat.

Mind. Are you in the right frame of mind to achieve your goals? Maybe better said "Are you setting realistic goals?" It's great to set big goals for yourself as long as you are breaking them down into smaller goals that will help you attain the big picture. Make sure you are constantly adjusting your goals to make them challenging. Once you attain some of the smaller goals you may be doing better than you imagined so you need to adjust so you can keep challenging yourself and improving. Most importantly are you telling yourself that you are a great sailor and you will get to the level you want. A positive frame of mind and attitude are everything.

Body. Do you know what to do to get to the fitness level that is best for sailing a laser? Here is where we see how the pieces start to fit together. Are you setting realistic fitness goals? This goes back to the mind. Go about your fitness with a plan. Set some small goals for

yourself and educate yourself on why you are doing this exercise. How does it make you a better sailor? Once you understand why you are doing a particular exercise you may be more motivated to do it and to keep up your fitness routine.

Boat. Seems simple enough, but with some of the things I've seen over the years you'd be surprised. Here is where people seem to put the cart in front of the horse most often. Start with the basics. Is your boat rigged correctly? Are you aware of the adjustments that need to be made to get off the start line, round the mark, go upwind/downwind? You get the idea. Without some of the basics it will be tough to be at the top of the pack. Now more pieces of the puzzle come into play. Did you set some realistic goals for this race or regatta? Are you physically ready for the conditions?

There is always someone who is better than you AND someone who is not up to your level yet. Go out and ask the people who are better for advice. Never be afraid to ask for help. They were once in your shoes. Like I said before no one has been perfect the first time they tried something. On the flip side make yourself available to help others as well. Now put all of these pieces together and you are a force to be reckoned with.

Practice, practice, practice, that's the only way to make yourself better. If you notice the sailors who spend the most time practicing on the water and in the gym are the ones who are getting better and better and passing you on the race course. Whether you are practicing with a team or by yourself you are still taking the time to improve yourself. Put a little thought into your game plan on the water as well as and you will begin to see that what is motivating you is actually putting the pieces together not just the finish line. Your success is now defined by the smaller goals and challenges you set for yourself rather than an imaginary line between two buoys.

As always, if you want to hear about a certain topic or have any questions feel free to contact me. You can always find me at [www.sailfit.com](http://www.sailfit.com) or email directly to [meka@sailfit.com](mailto:meka@sailfit.com). I look forward to hearing from you