

LIVING THE *HARD LIFE,* THE EASY WAY

I was waiting for my husband, Steve, to fly back to the Philippines, where I was overseeing a few boat projects. All that was left was to tidy up some details and slap on a few coats of antifouling. We were a couple of weeks away from relaunching *Kate*, our Newport 41, when something very unexpected happened. The world went into lockdown in an attempt to control a pandemic.

With international flights grounded, land transportation stopped and all marine traffic prohibited, I suddenly found myself stranded in a foreign country. Not only that, I was high and dry and all alone in a boatyard. No husband, no other cruisers, and only a skeleton staff charged with keeping an eye on things at the yard.

I will admit that the first few weeks were a little overwhelming. With so many unknowns, it was hard to plan, let alone think straight. As the weeks turned into months, I remembered all the lessons that sailing had taught me over the years—most important, that even the worst storms eventually ease, and conditions always improve. So I got on with the job of making

***Kate*, a Newport 41, on the hard during an unexpectedly extended stay in the Philippines.**



life on the hard a little easier. Here are a few tips from our (very) extended haul out.

Safety First: Getting on and off a vessel up on jack stands or in a cradle is awkward at best, and sometimes downright dangerous. Make sure the ladder or scaffolding is properly assembled, in good condition and secured in place

Know Your Limits: I love challenging myself, but I also know that I can't do everything. Whether it's hiring a pro to do a job that is beyond your skills or making sure you take a rest day, it's important to know and respect your personal limits. Remember, knowing when to stop is not the same as quitting.

Plan Ahead: Have the supplies to complete all the jobs on the list, enough food to keep the crew fed, and a contingency plan for when things don't work out quite the way you expected. Plan a yard period like you would a long passage: meticulously but with a fair amount of wiggle room. Make sure to budget a little extra time and money, just in case.

Make Yourself Comfortable: Time in the boatyard is always hot, dirty and chaotic. Making sure you have a few modern conveniences means you'll be just a little bit more comfortable. Everyone's comfort threshold is different, but even the basics of a usable sink on board and access to a clean bathroom ashore will make the days a little easier. If there are major interior projects being done, consider arranging for accommodations ashore so you don't have to live in and around the mess.

Keep Calm and Sail On:

When it comes to boatyards, problems and delays are inevitable. Some situations are definitely more challenging than others—believe me, I know. However, getting overly angry or upset when things go wrong won't make the troubles go away; it will just leave you feeling miserable. Take a deep breath, stay calm, and find the rational solution to the problem.

Daily Detox: It is important to take a few minutes every day to shift your focus and regroup, whether it be savoring a quiet coffee before digging in to the job list, going for a jog after a hard day's work or turning off social media for an hour in the evening. Taking care of your mental health is especially important during trying times. —*Heather Francis*

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