



Product:

Over 50's sailing club or course



- Aim:** A course / club aimed at adults aged 50 and over offering enjoyment, gentle keep fit and with a strong social element.
Product aimed at customers who are adults aged 50 and over.
Segment = Roger and Joy, Ralph and Phyllis.
- Duration:** Mid-week sessions, two hours to half a day long.
- Run by:** Similar aged empathetic instructors (ideally both male and female). With their awareness of age-related fears and frailties it will inspire a certain amount of confidence and trust amongst the course students and a feeling that if we could do it, so could they.
- Example:** A club that is run at the same time each week or a course delivered over a series of weeks.
Both with the aim of then linking to regular membership.
- Facilities/kit needed:** Large stable Adult dinghies or small keel boats.
Warm dry area to socialise: provision of coffee/cakes mid-afternoon works well
Spare wet weather gear/salopettes: not all attendees may have suitable kit
- Benefits:** Mid-week activity at your club or centre
Activity throughout the year
Regular income
Appealing to different type of members/customers
More members & potential volunteers
- Longer term actions:** Sustainable club
Fleet development, linked to club racing: encourage participation for those for whom boat purchase is an initial barrier – have suitable club boats for hire so that they can crew in club races and perhaps later may helm as well.
Develop club cruising programme: using day sailors as used on course.



Example of a successful over 50s sailing course

Upper Tamer Lake Sailing Club is a small friendly club based on a reservoir on the borders of Devon and Cornwall, near Bude. In 2010 the club ran (in conjunction with the local RYA Training Centre) a six week, two hour session programme to get over 50's into sailing.

Seventeen people attended the course with ages ranging from the 50's to the 80's and as a result the club ran a follow on course for over half of the original group. It became very clear that the course format of using stable day boats was very effective in getting older people onto the water as a common perceived fear from many (though not all) was that boats are 'tippy'. Having tried the Lugger and Bass boats their fears were quickly overcome. Although not suitable for all on the course, at least five people sailed in the club's Laser 16 and really enjoyed being in a faster, more exhilarating boat.

Using older instructors proved very successful,. It is interesting that two people on the course had tried a starter course in Pico's with a younger instructor and had nearly been put off totally by not getting to grips with the boat, finding it too cramped and being scared of capsizing. Later courses have been limited to a smaller intake (about 10) so that individuals get more time at the helm.

A key club member organised the course and the presentations to get people on the course, with another member providing homemade cakes went down really well and gave that personal touch which just welded the group together. The instructors' calming nature also helped people to relax quickly.

The consensus of those involved is that it has been a really worthwhile development, achieving its ultimate aim of getting older people into and back into sailing.

Nine months on, three dinghies have been bought by course participants (a Laser, Skipper 14 and Enterprise) and several more attendees have crewed during Sunday club racing. As this indicates, a subset of the participants have moved on to sailing single-handed dinghies such as Lasers and Toppers. Image below: screen capture from club's web site.

