

# BARF-O-RAMA

## Winning the Epic Battle Against Seasickness

What will you do when sea sickness strikes?

□

Admit it: you thought it was hilarious when Cousin Marvin added his half-digested egg 'n cheese sandwich to the chum slick. You couldn't stifle the grin when your brother-in-law Bubba blew chunks as you reeled up a 30-inch-er. And you busted out laughing when the new guy from the office turned limetreuse. But getting seasick when you're trying to fish is no laughing matter. At least, it isn't to the victim. Sure, for the rest of us onboard it's great entertainment. But if we could cure this ill we'd all be happier in the long run. There would be no more early endings to fishing trips, stained T-shirts, and chunk-clogged scuppers. Is there any magic bullet? Nope. In truth, the only 100-percent sure cure for seasickness is hugging an oak tree. But there are a lot of options for seasickness sufferers out there, and if you or someone you love gets a queasy feeling every time you go fishing, one or more of these measures may help.

### FOOT LOOSE

The most under-utilized seasickness cure is also the simplest: remove your shoes. Seasickness comes about when your inner ear – the balance center of your body – gets confused by the constant rolling and pitching motions of the boat. Somehow, taking off your shoes and going barefoot remedies the situation for about one third of the people who try the method. No one knows exactly why exposing your stinky feet to the fiberglass deck has this result, and it



may even be a placebo effect. But what's the difference, if it's effective?

### WATCH YOURSELF

A product called the Reliefband, which looks more or less like a wrist watch, sends tiny electrical signals which (the maker claims) create neuromodulation to stimulate the median nerve in your wrist, thereby "turning off" feelings of nausea headed for your brain. You put a little blob of connectivity gel between the band and your skin, and dial up one of five settings until you feel nausea-free – or your arm hairs fry off, whichever comes first.

It sounds great, and for some folks it is. But not for others. In our experience most people feel it helps and one in four

or five find the band to be a silver bullet. If you're one of those folks, this product will make you a happy camper. If not... The biggest problem with testing out the Reliefband is that it costs \$99. That means you'll have to roll some substantial dice to find out if it does work for you, or not.

### FEEL THE PRESSURE

In another twist of the wrist, there are a couple of products out there (Sea-Band, Psi, Toulify, etc.) that consist of a wrist band with a button in the middle. When properly worn, they're supposed to press just the right pressure-point to prevent a puke-fest. Some folks claim these things help, but I had a pair of these on the boat a few years back, and never



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continued

found a single person who thought they were effective. On the plus side at least they only cost \$10 or so. Keep that cost savings in mind, as you hang your head over the side.

## MEDICINAL MOVES

Dramamine and Bonine are both effective and from what we've seen they will prevent seasickness 85 or 90 percent of the time, as long as they are taken at least an hour or more prior to leaving the dock – once you shove off, it's way too late. But there's a very real downside. These drugs (especially Dramamine) leave you feeling sleepy and somewhat disoriented. In some cases, users end up sleeping more than they fish. Many seagoing sufferers would rather simply throw up, and then get back to fishing.

If you can get a prescription, Scopalamine (the patch) seems to work more like 95 percent of the time. In fact, many people think it's more or less a miracle cure for seasickness. And while it can cause a bit of drowsiness, for most people the effect is not nearly as significant as popping one of those pills. That said, there are other occasional side effects (most commonly dry mouth and/or skin irritation at the area of application). A bigger problem is that you can't get it over the counter, so it takes some advance planning to prepare for a fishing trip with the patch.



■ In seas like this, even the professionals might feel a bit icky from time to time. U.S. Coast Guard photo by [redacted]

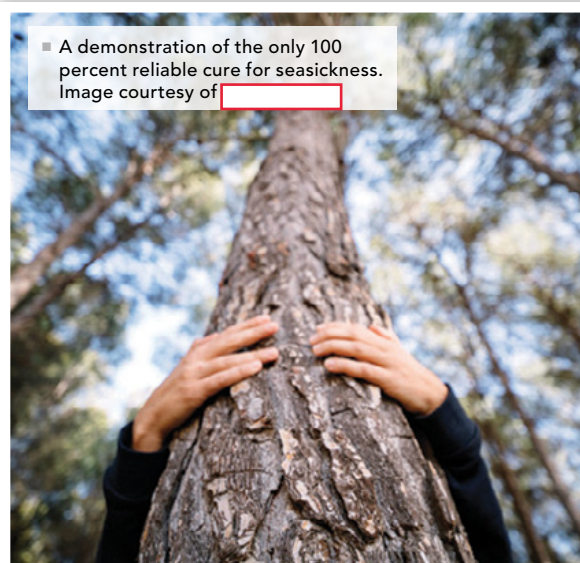
## SWEET NOTHINGS

Ancient lore says that the Vikings chewed on ginger root to cure seasickness. Uncle Olaf couldn't tell me if that was true or not, but these tales have spawned a plethora of ginger-based cures. You can find ginger sodas, ginger pills, and even ginger-based mouth freshener (open wide and spray), all of which claim to ease seasickness. Perhaps ginger works for some people, but we have yet to see any of these products function as advertised. In fact, we've been sent several ginger items for product testing. Each time we rounded up a seasickness-sufferer or two then headed for open water. Without fail, we've seen the ginger in action twice: once when the guinea pig swallowed

it down the hatch, and again when it re-entered the atmosphere an hour or two later. Note: stomach acids combined with carbonated ginger drinks will burn the wax right off your gel coat.

## ON THE OTHER HAND...

Maybe I have this all wrong. Maybe you get a kick out of being the only person onboard who has an iron stomach. Or maybe you got saddled with taking someone you don't really like very much fishing on your boat. In this situation, a puke-fest might just be your goal. You say you want to get Billy-Bob barfing? These tricks will do the job. (*All kidding aside, these are things you should **not** do unless you enjoy post-seasick clean-up duties.*)



■ A demonstration of the only 100 percent reliable cure for seasickness. Image courtesy of [redacted]

## FEELING HELPLESS? YOU'RE NOT.

If nothing works and your beloved but barfing crewmember seems doomed for the day remember these tips, which do help most people, most of the time:

1. Get out of the cabin. Any enclosure makes the feeling of seasickness 10 times worse.
2. Pick a point on the horizon and stare at it.
3. Get out of the boat, and float around in a life jacket for a few minutes. Note: this trick works for virtually everyone. Unfortunately as soon as they re-board the boat seasickness often kicks right back in, but at least it can provide a few minutes of relief.



## SUPERCHARGE THE CHUNKS

When you make your plans the night before, assign all the guys something to bring for the fishing trip. Ask one to handle drinks, another to get lunch, and so on. Tell them you'll supply the breakfast. Then show up at the boat ramp with a pile of extra-greasy, runny, sausage eggs and bacon sandwiches. You might even want to spice 'em up a bit with Tabasco.

## AMAZING GAZE

Tell everyone the bite's been red-hot at first light, so you want to leave the dock before sunup. When you pull off the dock in the pre-dawn darkness, make sure the passengers you want to get good and sick are sitting down. Then as you cruise, mention how awesome the stars look. Leaning your head back and gazing at the stars from a boat moving through the darkness is a sure-fire way to get seasick (and if you don't believe us, Mr. Irongut, just try it for yourself).

## BAIT BARF

Assign the offending party to cut bait, and put the cutting board on the deck.

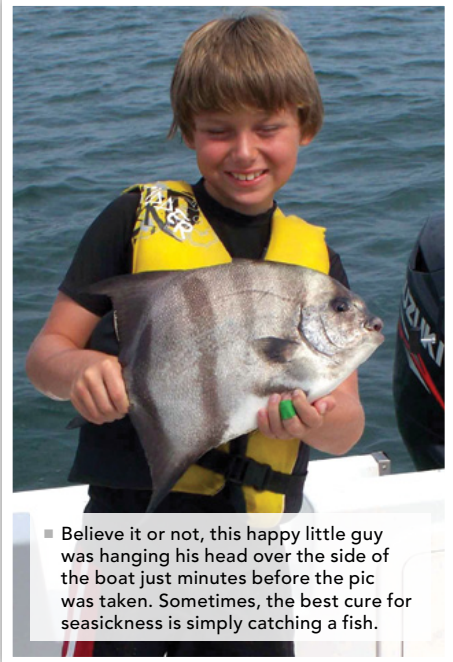
If you have a cutting board on a bait station or behind a leaning post, remove it first because the person's head has to be below gunwale-level for this tactic to work. Then slap down a big pile of bait – it usually takes five or 10 minutes before the effects start to kick in – and run the boat full-tilt while he or she inhales the aroma of cut fish slime and squid goo.

## PARTY HEARTY

Take your target out for drinks the night before your trip. Hangovers often bring on seasickness, especially if there's still some alcohol in the blood stream when you push off the dock. It helps mix up that balance center in the head.

## RUN FOR THE MONEY

Put all of the above factors into play, then run your boat with the beam facing the seas. Adjust your speed for maximum side-to-side roll. Remember, fore and aft pitching does not have as great an effect as side-to-side roll. If you arrive at the destination and your target party still hasn't



■ Believe it or not, this happy little guy was hanging his head over the side of the boat just minutes before the pic was taken. Sometimes, the best cure for seasickness is simply catching a fish.

popped his or her cork, do a few doughnuts and claim you're "initiating a search pattern" for the hotspot. As a last resort hang your head over the side and make a few barfing noises. Sometimes, it takes a ringer to get the ball rolling. ■