

Personal Preparations - What to Wear

The clothing options for an Atlantic crossing

Nick Gill from World Cruising Club's technical clothing provider Gill takes a look at modern sailing clothing and offers some ideas for your sailing kit-bag.



Layering – a personal climate control system

In sailing one thing is certain; you need to be prepared for all weather conditions. For an ARC crossing this will include the delivery to the Canary Islands, the variations in Atlantic weather during the trip, local Caribbean conditions and then the reverse for the return crossing. Space is at a premium on board, so even if budget is not a restricting factor there is a limit to how much clothing you can take. I believe it is best to look at your options in terms of layers. Hot or cold, the layering system makes enormous sense and it is your own personal climate control system.

Base Layer Options

The Base Layer is vital. One of its main purposes is to keep you dry next to the skin and it does this by wicking moisture away from the body. If you are wearing cotton it will absorb perspiration like blotting paper, and then transfer heat from your body 20 times faster than dry fabric leaving you feeling cold and clammy.

For the cooler part of the journey I recommend Gill **i2 Lite** or **i2 Tec**. There are many choices of long or short sleeve, crew neck or zip polos as well as leggings and boxer shorts. Don't forget the boxers, as damp cotton underwear is no fun! The main difference between i2 Lite and i2 Tec is that the Tec is slightly heavier and therefore warmer and also features an anti microbial finish. This, put simply, reduces the odour caused by being unable to wash it - very handy on an extended passage.

For warmer conditions, Gill has introduced technical long and short sleeve shirts. They are very fast drying, highly wicking and have a UV SPF 50 sun protection factor, essential for the latter part of the ARC rally. This new Technical Apparel range has a natural feel, is not tight fitting and is very comfortable for long periods.

In many ways there is an overlap between the warm and cool weather base layers. They both do a similar job but the warm weather technical apparel is designed for use on and off the boat despite being 100% technical.

Mid Layer Options

There has probably been more development in what we loosely term mid-layer, than any other area of our business in the last few years. New materials and production techniques have considerably increased the options, whilst at the same time widened their usage opportunity.

The role of the mid-layer is to provide thermal insulation. This can come in many forms from a relatively thin micro fleece to a fully waterproof, highly breathable, insulated jacket and salopettes.

One of the materials that has had such an impact at Gill has been soft-shell. A sandwich material that gives warmth, water and wind resistance. They are available in different weights and degrees of stretch and warmth. My choice is the soft shell race jacket and pants. As well as warmth, it has a high degree of water resistance and gives protection for most conditions. It is so versatile, being just as happy on shore or even on the slopes.

For a more conventional mid-layer I recommend the convert range. A lightweight, highly breathable rip-stop fabric with a Thermore® synthetic fill insulation that compresses easily and insulates when wet. I recently spoke to someone who had just returned from an Atlantic crossing who said she did not take it off for 20 days. "It was like wearing a sleeping bag".

Outer Layer Options

The Outer Layer is for real protection against the elements and must be completely water and windproof. In order to work most efficiently, the fabric should be breathable to let the moist air escape from inside the garment.

There are three suitable options in the Gill range to suit all budgets. The main difference between the garment options is the height of the collar and the durability of the materials. There are two types of material available; 2-layer and 3-layer.

The 2-layer option is generally lighter and because the coating is unprotected, requires a lining in the garment. It is also less expensive and slightly less durable.

The 3-layer fabrics are a sandwich with the waterproof membrane in the middle. The outer layer gives the texture and the abrasion and snag resistance, whereas the inner is a scrim and this protects the coating from wear and tear. Gill 3-layer garments are the most durable and do not need a lining, but are also more expensive. This is due not only to the fabric cost (more than 50% higher) but also to the taping costs, both in materials and labour.

Outer Layer Garment Options

OS 2 Offshore Range

Our most suitable 2-layer option is the OS 2 Offshore / Coastal Jacket and Trousers. It is mid-weight, packed with features, has a collar that ends just at the top of the ears and is the most suitable suit for a wide range of conditions. **If most of your sailing is coastal cruising with the occasional offshore passage** and a very occasional ARC crossing, then Key West will do the job. It is reasonably priced, comes in unisex

and women's specific sizing and the women's trousers have a very useful drop seat.

Atlantic

As its name implies, the Atlantic is ideal if you do a fair amount of offshore sailing and the occasional race. It is made using a 3-layer, 5-dot, ocean grade fabric and it is heavier and more durable with a much higher collar.



Ocean Racer

If budget is less of an issue there is the Ocean Racer jacket, developed with the crew of Volvo Ocean Race winner *illbruck*, combining the features of the Atlantic suit with many innovative design systems that reduce weight and improve the garment breathability, but without sacrificing performance. It performs like an Ocean Jacket but feels more like a Coastal Jacket.

Hands and Feet

Wearing shoes and gloves when moving about on deck is essential to avoid injury. You could potentially be 2 weeks from outside assistance. As the weather is likely to be predominantly warm, shoes rather than boots are the best option. Gill's new boat shoe, called the "Decktech", has been tested independently in wet and dry conditions on varnished wood and glass fibre decking, and proved to have outstanding grip. Ideal on a rolling wet deck.

Gloves are also important, not just to protect from rope burn but also from getting fingers caught or trapped. There are many options but I would strongly recommend long finger gloves. The **Gill Pro-Glove** is probably the toughest on the market using a material known as Proton Ultra as opposed to the thinner Amara.

What to Pack

Weight and space are often a limitation on board so careful planning of your wardrobe is essential. The following table lists what I consider to be the

Suggested Atlantic Kit Bag

Technical products that completely avoid cotton. Shirts can double up as a thermal base layer under waterproof clothing - perform the same function.

Technical Apparel Range

Ideal base layer for warm weather sailing offering UV protection. Available in women's styles and colours.

Quick dry UV shirts:

Sonar Long Sleeve Polo_C003	£35.00
Reverb long sleeve Tee_C002	£30.00
Equinox Short Sleeve Tee_C001	£25.00

Technical Apparel quick dry shorts:

Escape Shorts_C005	£40.00
Technical Sailing Shorts with pad_1642	£42.50
i2 Lite Base Layer boxers	£15.00
i2 Tec Tee Base layer	£35.00

Mid Layer

Convert Jacket	£75.00
Convert Salopettes, or	£80.00
Crosswind Mid Layer Jacket	£100.00
Crosswind Mid Layer Salopettes	£100.00

Outer layer

Atlantic Jacket_ OS4J	£255.00
Atlantic Trouser_ OS4T	£180.00

Footwear

Decktech Shoe_965	£65.00
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Accessories

Long finger Pro glove_7450	£25.00
Technical quick dry sailing cap_136	£15.00
Polarised racing and floatable	
Sunglasses with retaining strap_9472	£35.00
Large 70 Litre Cargo Bag_ L002	£47.50
Wash Bag _ L011	£15.00

best options from the Gill range. I have split it into different temperature conditions and different layers. I have also included the dry weight of the product as a guide. Whichever brand of clothing you end up packing, it is definitely worth checking out the layering and temperature guide as it makes good sense. For further information visit www.gillmarine.com

Gill		GILL - WHAT TO WEAR FOR SAILING				Gill	
TEMPERATURE RANGE							
Layer	Very Warm		Moderate		Cool		
Temperature Range	> 22 Degrees C Plus		15 - 22 Degrees C		< 15 Degrees C		
Base Layer	Range Description		Range Description		Range Description		RESPECT THE ELEMENTS™
	Tech App	Quick Drying UV technical shirts in long and short sleeve for men and women Lite Base layer range	i2 Tec	As very warm plus Base layer	i2 Tec	Base layer	
Shorts and Trousers	C005 C006 1642	Men's Escape quick dry shorts Men's Quick dry long Haul Trousers Technical sailing shorts	As very warm		i2 Tec	Base layer	
Mid Layer			i3 i4 i5 1610	Micro Fleece tops and bottoms Mid-weight fleece tops & salopettes Crosswind Softshell jacket	i4 i5 i5 1610	Mid weight fleece tops & salopettes Crosswind jacket & salopettes Crosswind Performance Mid-layer Softshell jacket	
Outer Layer	IN10 C019	Inshore-Lite jacket & waist pants Intrepid Jacket	OS5 OS4 OC2	Key West Offshore jacket & trousers Drop Seat trouser for women Atlantic jacket & trousers Racer jacket & trousers	OS4 OC2	Atlantic jacket & trousers Racer jacket & trousers	
Feet	960	Gripper shoe	960 909	Gripper shoe Tall Yachting boot	909	Tall Yachting boot	
Head	138	Gill Polarised floating sunglasses Peaked sailing cap	138 HT1	Gill Polarised Floating Sunglasses Peaked Sailing Cap i3 Beanie	9637 HT3	Gill Polarised floating sunglasses Pro-Racing Goggle i4 Skull cap	

Notes regarding the table:

* The temperature range will depend to a large extent on the wind and / or sea state. Wind strength in particular will affect the type of clothing needed.

* In the layering sections there are in many cases more than one option. It can be a choice and not necessarily all.