

On Deck | CRUISING TIPS

COASTAL CRUISING

Improving V-Berth Comfort

→ The best berth aboard many older sailboats is the V-berth forward; that's certainly the case aboard our Morgan Out Island 33. The trouble is that it's hard to make a standard bedsheet work well on a V-berth because of the mattress shape. Unless you buy a custom-made sheet, you will likely have problems with excess material; it can also be a problem keeping your feet properly covered. We solved the V-berth bed-linen problem on our boat by taking standard sized sheets and modifying them slightly. Here's how we did it:

→ First measure the widest part of the V-berth, then select a sheet that is wider than this size. For example, our V-berth is 92in at its widest spot. Queen-size sheets are generally 84in wide, so we selected a set of king-size sheets 108in across. Length is usually not a problem; most standard sheets are around 102in long and most berths are no longer than a standard 80in residential mattress. Our berth is 74in long.

Take the set's flat sheet and fold it in half lengthwise, then stitch the two halves together at the bottom. Unfold the sheet and rotate it so the stitched edge is underneath the rest of the sheet. The result, as seen in the figure below, is a semi-pentagonal shape with a pocket at the bottom. Stitch the fitted sheet in the same manner. The result will be the same as the flat sheet, except the four corners have elastic restraints. It should take you less than an hour to sew up the bottoms of both sheets.

Put the fitted sheet on the V-berth by putting the mattress into the pocket and pulling the sheet all the way up: tuck the head and sides under the mattress and the sheet's elastic corner restraints will secure it at the top.

Next pull the pocket of the flat sheet over the bottom of the mattress. Once this sheet is pulled all the way up, put a blanket on top and then, to give it that inviting look, fold the top part of the sheet over the blanket.

Of course you can also sew similar pockets in lightweight blankets or spreads. The results will become obvious after the first night. You and your mate will be happy—and well-rested. — BOB TIGAR

- A. Begin with the sheet unfolded
- B. Fold the sheet in half and stitch one end closed
- C. Open the sheet with the stitch seam down and prepare to slip it over the pointed end of your V-berth mattress

