

## Whisker Pole Buyers Guide

### Everything You Need to Know to Improve Your Downwind Sailing

#### Why Do I Need a Whisker Pole?

Whisker Poles are the best way to control your headsail when sailing deep downwind. They expose and stabilize your headsail in a wing-on-wing position, keeping it out of the mainsail's wind shadow where it can help push the boat forward with great efficiency. Properly deployed, it will allow you to sail deeper, faster, safer, and all without that highly annoying downwind headsail flop.



#### What Are the Basic Types of Whisker Poles?

##### Fixed Length

Fixed length Whisker Poles are the most basic type and use a one-piece static length tube that is sized to fit a specific headsail size. The biggest advantage of fixed length poles is their lighter weight, but they can be difficult to store because of their long length.

##### Adjustable Length

Adjustable length Whisker Poles, also known as telescoping poles, are the most common type and offer users the ability to adjust the pole length to match the size of the flying headsail. They are also easier to deploy because they can be extended after being connected to the mast, which is especially helpful if you commonly sail shorthanded. They also retract to a shorter length, making them easier to store.

## Forespar Offers Four Models of Whisker Poles



### Twist-Lock Poles

Our most basic telescoping pole style, [Twist-Lock](#) poles, allow you to adjust their length by simply twisting the two pole pieces to loosen or tighten as needed. These poles are commonly used on smaller-to-mid size boats in gentle-to-moderate conditions. We offer two types of Twist-Lock poles. A lightweight small boat version perfect for daysailers, dinghies and small one-design boats, and a Large Boat Twist-Lock pole for boats up to 28 ft.



**Line Control with UXP Mast Connection**



**Line Control with UTS Mast Connection**

### Line Control Poles

Our most popular and versatile pole style, Line Control (LC) poles incorporate an exclusive internal mechanism that adjusts the pole length to your exact need by simply pulling a line and cleating it off. Available in [aluminum](#), [carbon](#), or a [50/50](#) combination with the carbon portion on the outboard end, our LC poles are the perfect solution for most users. These poles are commonly used on mid-to-large size boats in a full range of conditions. If you plan to commonly use a LC pole in long-term heavy wind conditions, please contact Forespar directly to ensure your pole is sized correctly.



### Tri-Reacher Poles

Perfect for the value conscious coastal sailor, our [Tri-Reacher](#) pole offers several preset length options using a series of pre-drilled pin holes along the pole's length. The user simply pulls the pin out, sets the pole close to the desired length, and then locates the nearest hole to drop the pin back into. These poles are commonly used on smaller-to-mid size cruisers in gentle-to-moderate conditions.



## Fixed Length Poles

Our most basic design, a Fixed Length pole is not adjustable in length and is sized to be used with a specific headsail size. These are commonly only used in very high-load conditions.

## Safe Sailing with a Whisker Pole

The more you use your whisker pole, the more you will enjoy it and the easier it will be to deploy, but it's important to keep a couple of safety considerations in mind:

- As an operational note for all adjustable poles; **never attempt to extend or retract any whisker pole under load.** Furl the headsail or otherwise de-power the sail before setting or taking down any whisker pole.
- Remember that Whisker Poles are only intended to be used downwind. If the boat is turned to windward or back winded, it must be disconnected from the sail or you may damage the pole and void the warranty.
- Be aware that autopilots sometimes have a difficult time keeping up with sea conditions. Do not leave a whisker pole unattended in highly variable wind conditions.

## FAQs

### Can I Use a Whisker Pole with My Furling Headsail?

Yes – if you order an adjustable Whisker Pole, it is the perfect choice for furling headsails or multiple sizes of jibs and genoas.

### Can I Use a Whisker Pole with My Asymmetrical Sail?

Yes – asymmetrical sails are subject to the same downwind dynamics as jibs or genoas, so a Whisker Pole will provide the same performance advantages as it will with a standard headsail. Please note that large asymmetrical sails will subject the pole to higher stress loads. If you plan to use your Whisker Pole in heavier wind conditions, a larger diameter pole is recommended for added strength. In addition, the reduced weight of a carbon pole will help make deploying and handling with an asymmetrical sail much safer and easier.

### Can I Use a Whisker Pole as a Spinnaker Pole?

Not really – in general, a spinnaker applies more force to a downwind pole than a traditional headsail. Because of these increased loads, spinnaker poles are always Fixed Length style poles and usually not sized correctly to work properly with a jib or genoa because of its length.

## What to Consider Before Ordering a Whisker Pole

### Expected Sailing Conditions

Two of the most important things to consider before ordering a Whisker Pole are the expected wind and weather conditions during use. If you only plan to use the pole in light-to-moderate conditions, Forespar's standard pole size recommendations will be fine. If you are planning to routinely use the pole in heavy weather or offshore sailing, you may want to consider going up to a larger diameter pole for additional strength.

### Size and Strength of Crew

Like almost everything on a sailboat, deploying a Whisker Pole involves skill and practice because you need to get on the foredeck to connect the pole to the headsail. If you have a larger boat or expect to sail with a short-handed crew, you may want to consider buying a lighter weight carbon or 50/50 Line Control model pole to make handling easier. It is also recommended to use the vertical pole storage option described below, for easier and safer handling.

### Onboard Pole Storage

As all sailors know, storage is always a serious consideration. This is no different with a Whisker Pole. Before ordering, you need to carefully consider how you want to store your pole onboard when it is not in use.

#### There are Three Potential Ways to Store Your Pole:

- **Deck Chocks** – Install a pair of [Deck Chocks](#) onto your boat's forward side deck and connect the pole ends to the chocks to secure it in place.



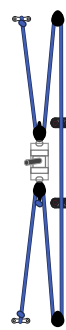
Part #	Model	Description
300002	DC-2 "Ultra"	For UXP, UTR, GP & UGPS end fittings
300013	DC-TS "Ultra"	For Toggle Style TS & UTS end fittings
300028	DC-TS-S	Stainless for Toggle UTS & TS ends
300029	DC-2-S	Stainless for UXP, UTR, UGPS & GP ends

- **Stanchion Chocks** – A pair of [Stanchion Mount Pole Chocks](#) that encircle the pole's tube to hold it off the deck. A two-piece design, they quickly and easily install around two of your lifeline stanchions.



Part #	Model	Description
300050	Chock SC-200	2"
300042	Chock SC-250	2-1/2"
300043	Chock SC-300	3"
300044	Chock SC-350	3-1/2"

- **Vertical Pole Storage** - [Storing the pole vertically](#) in front of your mast using a long T-Track to allow you to hoist one end of the pole up and then snap the lower end of it in place with a flexible [Mast Chock](#) that is located down closer to the deck.



As described above, this technique is great for short-handed sailing because the inboard end of the pole is always connected and ready to be deployed once lowered into position.

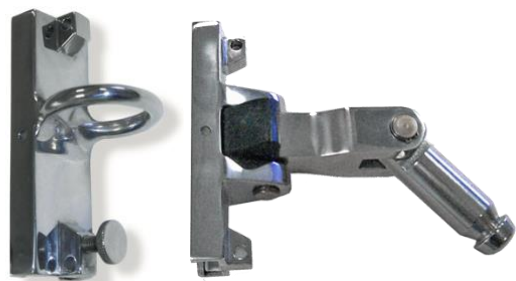
If you are considering the Vertical Storage option, be sure the front of your mast has enough clear surface to install a [T-Track](#) that is long enough to hold the retracted pole length once hoisted up. If you have an existing T-Track, you'll need to measure how high off the deck the track extends to be sure you can raise the pole up high enough to clear the deck in front of the mast. If not, you will need to install a longer track or an extension to your existing track.

## What Are the Rigging Considerations?

### Mast Connection Point

Whisker poles require a mast connection point, so you need to consider how that will work on your boat. If you currently have a [Mast Pad Eye Ring](#) or [T-Track](#) installed on the front of your mast, you are a step ahead.

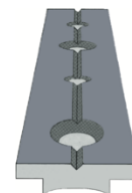
For Mast Pad Eye Rings that are already installed, all you'll need to do is make sure the pole end you order fits properly into that ring so that it will not bind as the pole is moved forward and back. To do that, measure the ring diameter and then compare it to the thickness of the hook side of the desired pole end to make sure there is enough space inside the ring to allow for free movement in all directions.



If you currently have a T-Track installed on the front of your mast, all you need to do is order the desired [Mast Car](#) style to match your inboard pole end and install that car onto your mast track. Be aware that there are different size T-Tracks, so be sure to measure the width and the thickness of the "T" portion of your track to ensure the car you order will fit properly.



If you do not currently have a T-Track or Mast Pad Eye installed on your mast, you will need to install one or the other, depending upon which pole you order. If you plan to store your pole vertically, you will also need to install a full-length T-Track in front of your mast as described above. Forespar's T-Track is available in 7.5' lengths which can be combined or cut to create any T-Track length.



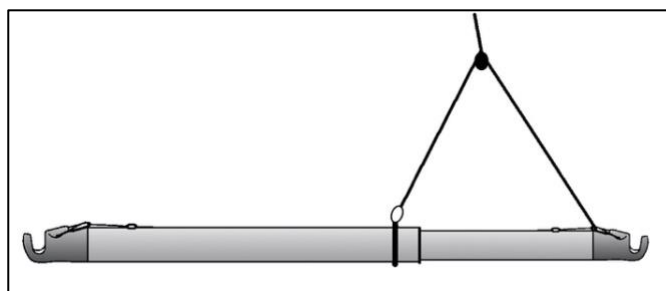
### Topping Lift and Large Pole Bridle

In light-to-moderate wind conditions, Whisker Poles do not necessarily need a topping lift to support their weight. However, a topping lift will keep the pole level and allows for better sail shape.

If you do not have a specific pole topping lift available, you can use a staysail halyard or second jib halyard. Spinnaker halyards can also be used briefly, but as they exit above the headstay, they may chafe if used for long periods, and so are not recommended. You may also want to consider rigging a dedicated pole topping lift, especially if you are planning to store the pole vertically.



On larger Line Control poles, the use of a Topping Lift Bridle system is also recommended to help support the pole in the middle to reduce the deflection at the joint in heavier wind conditions. On these larger LC models, a Dyneema bridle strap is included to use as a hoist point. For more details, this [video](#) shows how to properly rig and use a bridle towards the end.



### What Pole Model and Size Do I Need for My Boat?

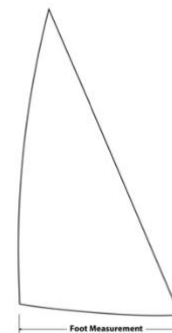
The easiest way to determine the right size pole for your boat is to use [Forespar's Whisker-Pole-by-Boat-Model](#) guide. Here you will find a long list of recommended pole sizes for most sailboat models which has been compiled over the last couple of decades by Forespar sailors.

## What if I Don't See My Boat on Your Recommendation List?

Don't worry if you do not see your boat model in our list. We will make sure you get a pole correctly sized for your boat. Contact Forespar® Sales Tech Support if you have ANY questions on proper sizing for your boat after reading through the following information.

## Headsail Foot Measurement Sizing

Whisker pole length should be no less than 100% of the foot length of whichever headsail is being flown. To get this length, measure from the tack to the clew of your sail. You should also consider including some overlap of this dimension because strength-wise, poles telescoped to their maximum length are at their weakest point of service. Diameter is a major function of strength. As an example, a 2-1/2" diameter tube is as much as 70% stronger than a 2" diameter tube, so you will add strength by using a slightly longer and larger pole.



## How Forespar's LC Whisker Pole Model Names & Labels Tell the Story

All Forespar Whisker Pole model names include both the retracted and extended length in the naming convention. As an example, a LC 12-22 is a Line Control pole that extends to a maximum length of 22' and retracts to a length of 12'.

Each Forespar pole also includes a usage label that notes the maximum recommended boat size for each pole. We strongly suggest you use the recommended size pole for your boat and cannot offer any warranty on poles that are too small for the boat based on label information. Also be aware that this is a general recommendation, and we suggest you consider going with a larger size pole diameter if you are near the top end of the recommendation and plan to use the pole in heavy weather conditions or with a larger headsail.

## Line Control Pole General Sizing Recommendations

Boat Length:	Working Jib		Genoa	
	Med. Air	Heavy Air	Med. Air	Heavy Air
Up to 33 ft.	LC 10'-18'	LC 10'-18'	LC 10'-18'	LC 12'-22'
Up to 35 ft.	LC 12'-22'	LC 12'-22'	LC 12'-22'	LC 13'-24'
Up to 46 ft.	LC 13'-24'	LC 13'-24'	LC 13'-24'	LC 15'-27'
Up to 50 ft.	LC 15'-27'	LC 15'-27'	LC 15'-27'	Custom Carbon Poles

## Small Boat Twist-Lock Pole Sizing & Pad Eye Mounting

The Small Boat Twist-Lock poles (models [ADJ 4-8](#) & [ADJ 6-12](#)) are designed for daysailers, dinghies and small one-design boats and come with a Mast Pad Eye properly sized for these poles. This eye should only be used with these poles.



## Large Boat Twist-Lock Sizing & Pad Eye Mounting

The larger Twist-Lock style poles (models [HD 6-12 DL & ADJ 7-15](#)

[DL](#)) are designed for sailboats up to 28ft and should be used

with the Forespar® [PE-3-SF \(#400001\)](#) or [PE-3-SC \(#400002\)](#)

stainless steel Mast Pad Eyes which are sold separately. Any

fixed Mast Pad Eye should be mounted on the forward

centerline of the mast. This is so you can fly the pole from the

single mount on both port and starboard sets. The height of the

eye on the mast is determined by the height of the clew when

the headsail is set. Ideally, you want to fly the pole level, so if you have more than one headsail,

and they have different clew heights, you may want to mount two Mast Pad Eyes to match the

different clew heights.



## Whisker Pole Questions Checklist

Use this checklist to ensure you order the correct pole for your boat.

1. Length of boat \_\_\_\_\_
2. Style (make, model) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Rig (masthead, ketch, cutter, schooner, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Size headsail to be used (100% jib, 150% genoa, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Bow sprit on boat? Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Offshore, long distance blue water cruising? Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_
7. 1-1/4" T-Track on mast already? Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Will the pole be stored on the mast? Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ No) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Foot dimension of headsail used (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist Notes:

- If you answered **YES** to questions #5 or #6, seriously consider going up one pole size for additional strength.
- If you answered **NO** to #7, consider adding T-Track to the mast. This is much stronger than a single eye and allows adjustment of the inboard height of the pole.
- If you answered **YES** to question #8 you need to consider the specific vertical pole storage car options based on the pole you plan to order and its tube diameters. Check out specific options [here](#).

## Questions? Let Us Help



We realize that outfitting your boat with a Whisker Pole can be a bit of a daunting and confusing task, so please feel free to let our experts help you select the right pole for you boat.

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