

What to use for Anchor Rode

There are 2 main ways to go with Anchor rode for Powerboats or Sailboats. You can use anchor line/rope or anchor chain. I was a fan for many years on the line/rope with a 20 foot length of chain from the anchor. I felt the length of chain from the anchor protected the line from getting chafed from dragging on the bottom as the boat would swing in the wind or change of tide. The chain would scrape along the bottom to a new position instead of your bare anchor line as it bumped or snagged shells, rocks, or debris on the bay or sea floor. By using the chain off the anchor, you've added weight which keeps the anchor line parallel along the bottom, making your boat anchor always bite deeper into the bottom.

As my cruising area expanded, I noticed other new or used boats and yachts anchoring with all chain. That ratt-a-tat-tat of the chain going overboard is very distinguishable, and as years passed by, I heard this sound more and more. Other than being able to let out much less rode if you have all chain, I noticed another factor in direct relationship between the two. With anchor rode of line/rope, you swing around a lot more and also feel much more movement when the wind freshens. With chain for your anchor rode, you seem to swing less and as the wind gets fresher, you also seem to just ease back only a little as the wind blows. It's like slow motion.

Diving below the water, I have seen the difference between the chain anchor rode and the line/rope anchor rode. With the chain you can see it head right for the bottom and then go in the direction of the boat anchor. As your boat or yacht eases back from a puff of wind, the chain lifts off the bottom. That's a lot of weight that chain has to lift off the bottom so you don't move back too much. With line/rope anchor rode, that same puff of wind pushes your boat or yacht back till it gets to the chain by the anchor and sometimes gives you a jerk as it tugs on the anchor itself. Also when swinging in the wind, the anchor rode with line/rope takes on a full swing of the line, while the all chain rode from its weight keeps you in tight swing so you don't notice it as much.

In bigger blows it is good to use all chain rode to keep that anchor biting the bottom, but with this kind of wind you can be putting more stress on the chain links and the boat or yacht by the jerking. Here is where you should hook a line/rope right to the chain, maybe 20 feet or so and tie the line/rope to a cleat. This section will now allow the stretching abilities of the line/rope to create less strain and stress to the boat and on the chain links themselves.

Chain comes in varied sizes and tensile to match your boat or yacht needs. There are some considerations to the storage and weight of chain, but also most boats and yachts today have anchor windlass to help let out and/or bring the chain aboard. Take a look around the next time you anchor...You will see the difference.

About the Author

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