

# Gear on test



More marine gear tested and rated by the *Sailing Today* team, including a portable heater, some new battery technology and a round-up of mooring compensators. **David Parker** reports

## Mini test: Mooring compensators

**M**ooring compensators or 'snubbers' not only absorb shock loads on your mooring lines, they also protect dock warps from chafe and prevent wear and tear on cleats and topsides. They can also make life aboard quieter by reducing the noise of the snatching lines as the boat surges back and forth.

We chose five different designs to see how they performed under tests for shock loading. We carried out a series of drop tests with 10kg, 20kg and 30kg loads, progressively increasing the weight each time. Using 14mm mooring lines, the weights were hoisted up a 3m high scaffold and then dropped. Using an in-line load cell, we read off the

shock loading on the line – the lower the figure the better the compensator absorbed the shock from the drop. Each test was repeated three times, we then averaged the results.



### FORSHEDA £19.18 Rating ★★★★★

The Forsheda performed well, but is fiddly to rig because of its locking eyes. After absorbing heavy loads the lines tighten even more, making it difficult to remove them later. Once you have threaded a warp you'd be disinclined to take it off again... which literally ties up a rope with a snubber on it.

Forshedas come in four different sizes. The model we tried came with the recommendation that the line is coiled three times around the shaft after threading it through the eyes. Beware of 'overwrapping' since this increases extensibility. If compensating movements are too large, the life of the mooring compensator is greatly reduced.

Prices 10-12mm £15.98; 14-16mm £19.18; 18-20mm £28.75; 22-24mm £37.27

Contacts Plastimo ☎ 012380 262211  
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### WIRE SHOCK ABSORBER £3.20

Rating ★★★★★

We had high hopes for this giant spring, but it gave disappointing results. It requires the use of two separate lines for rigging, and because it's made of electro-galvanised steel it has to be held away from the topsides to prevent chafe.

It proved to have poor capacity for absorbing heavy loads. We also noticed that if the spring twisted as it was loaded, it was less efficient.

Rubber compensators, however, could be contorted in any direction without affecting their performance.

Prices 280mm x 4.5mm £3.20; 350mm x 5.5mm £4.27; 430mm x 7mm £6.39

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### SOWESTER SNUBBER £7.54

Rating ★★★★★

The Sowester model is quick and easy to tie on, with more straightforward locking eyes than the Forsheda. Although overall the readings for the Sowester and Forsheda were very similar, we think that this design has the edge. During our tests, the Sowester Snubber absorbed loads effectively and gave consistently good results. Because this type of compensator has the same thickness over its length, loads are spread evenly so the rope doesn't tighten up much after heavy loading.

Prices 270mm £5.26; 330mm £7.54

Contact Sowester ☎ 01202 667700

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## BUNGY MOORING COMPENSATORS £19.96

Rating ★★★★★

New from Anchor Marine, this design gave excellent results and achieved the best performance overall. These single compensators are by far the easiest and fastest to fit. They come in packs of two (£9.98 per pack) but we carried out our tests using four in series. You simply thread a loop of line through the hole, close the clip and the line locks the snubber in place.

Designed to fit lines up to 20mm, the real advantage of these compensators is that you can simply clip them on while still tied up. You can vary the number according to how exposed your mooring is. Contact Sowester ☎ 01202 667700 Fax 01202 668585 Email [sow@sowester.co.uk](mailto:sow@sowester.co.uk)



## RUBBER STROP £6.34

Rating ★★★★★

Because it's much thinner than the rest, you'd probably only consider this model for use on a less exposed mooring or for a lightweight boat.

However, we were surprised how well it performed under light loads. We weren't able to get a reading on our maximum load because of our drop height – basically, the weights hit the ground before the strop absorbed the load, so we couldn't take accurate readings. Having said that, the strop didn't break even at maximum extension. You also need to allow plenty of line to take up the elasticity of the strop – so it could be a big jump to the pontoon with this one.

Contact Sowester ☎ 01202 667700 Fax 01202 668585 Email [sow@sowester.co.uk](mailto:sow@sowester.co.uk)

Taking the strain in our mini-test round-up of mooring compensators

### Sailing Today Verdict

We found that the snubbers which were the easiest to use also gave the best results. The Sowester Snubber is not only cheap, it's also quick to thread and easy to untie.

Even simpler to use is the new Bungy Compensator from Anchor Marine. You can put these on without untying warps and change the number as required. You could even use them on an anchor warp. Simple yet effective.

## Snubber shock-loading tests

Model	Forsheda	Sowester	Wire	Bungy	Strop
Weight 10kg	66	62	96	56	71
20kg	133	110	105	93.5	200
30kg	201	215	272	183	-
Average	133	129	158	110	-

