

Feeling Seasick?

Viki Moore /

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Viki is a qualified RYA Offshore Yacht master, Director of Yachting New Zealand, founder of Women Who Sail New Zealand, Regional Rear Commodore- South Pacific for the Ocean Cruising Club, President of the Little Ship Club of Canterbury, a Seven Seas Cruising Association Cruising Station Host, and has a wealth of sailing experience under her belt. She has also been recognised for her services to the sailing community and has received a Yachting New Zealand Excellence Award in 2016 and the Ocean Cruising Club 2021 Award in 2021 for extraordinary service to the cruising community at large.

If you've ever spent any time on a boat in rough conditions then you'll probably understand what feeling seasick is all about.

First you might start feeling a bit hot and uncomfortable, you get a funny sensation in your mouth, that queasy feeling in the pit of your stomach, you start turning green and clammy, you feel dizzy and generally horrible.

And, despite all your best efforts not to, the vomiting starts. At first you're worried you might die, but as time goes on you are more worried that you won't!

It is at this stage that the people on board who aren't seasick offer really helpful suggestions such as:

"The only real cure for seasickness is to sit under a tree!"

Just for your information, this is a dangerous thing to say to a person feeling sick in the middle of the ocean, miles away from any trees and with no easy way of escaping. They will not appreciate the humour – trust me.

But what if there was a way you could magically transport yourself off the rolling boat, put yourself out of your misery, remove yourself entirely from the ocean and surround yourself with trees, falling leaves, a crackling campfire and have stable ground underneath your feet, and make yourself feel better almost instantly?

Ahhh if only there was a way of doing that. Wouldn't it be incredible?

So a couple of years ago my friend Dudley Jackson gave me a call. “Viki I am developing a new seasickness cure, thought you might be interested. It is going to be a breakthrough!” Dudley is an IT Engineer and a sailing friend of mine.

Wow, I thought, this sounds cool. I asked Dudley to keep me posted as to how things were progressing with their development.

Then last year Dudley asked me if I’d be interested in going out for a look at how the product worked. Of course I jumped at the opportunity. I am always keen to try new things, especially those that involve going out in a boat for the afternoon.

So we arrived at the marina. Dudley loaded us in to a speedboat and we headed out in to the chop in the middle of the harbour where he positioned the boat side on to the waves. Just to give us a feeling of instability.

Generally speaking I don’t tend to get seasick unless it is quite rough and I have got a horrible hangover or if I’ve got my head in an oily bilge on a really hot day. However I do get terribly seasick watching things like video games, or car racing games on TV.

So when Dudley introduced me to See-LEVEL and handed me a pair of Virtual Reality goggles I was a bit apprehensive. I actually thought that this would set off my seasickness not cure it.

Anyway of course I’d agreed to give this a go, so I reluctantly put the goggles on. It was a completely different experience to any other I’d had with VR goggles. I was immediately transported to a relaxing forest, overlooking the water. Leaves falling down from the trees above, a hot crackling camp fire on one side, a tent on the other. The ground was stable, the horizon was level, I actually felt like I was on land, not rolling around in a little boat in the middle of the harbour.

There were calm instructions and relaxing music playing. Completely blocking out your current environment and really taking you to a relaxing place. I felt all my anxiety of wearing the goggles melt away.

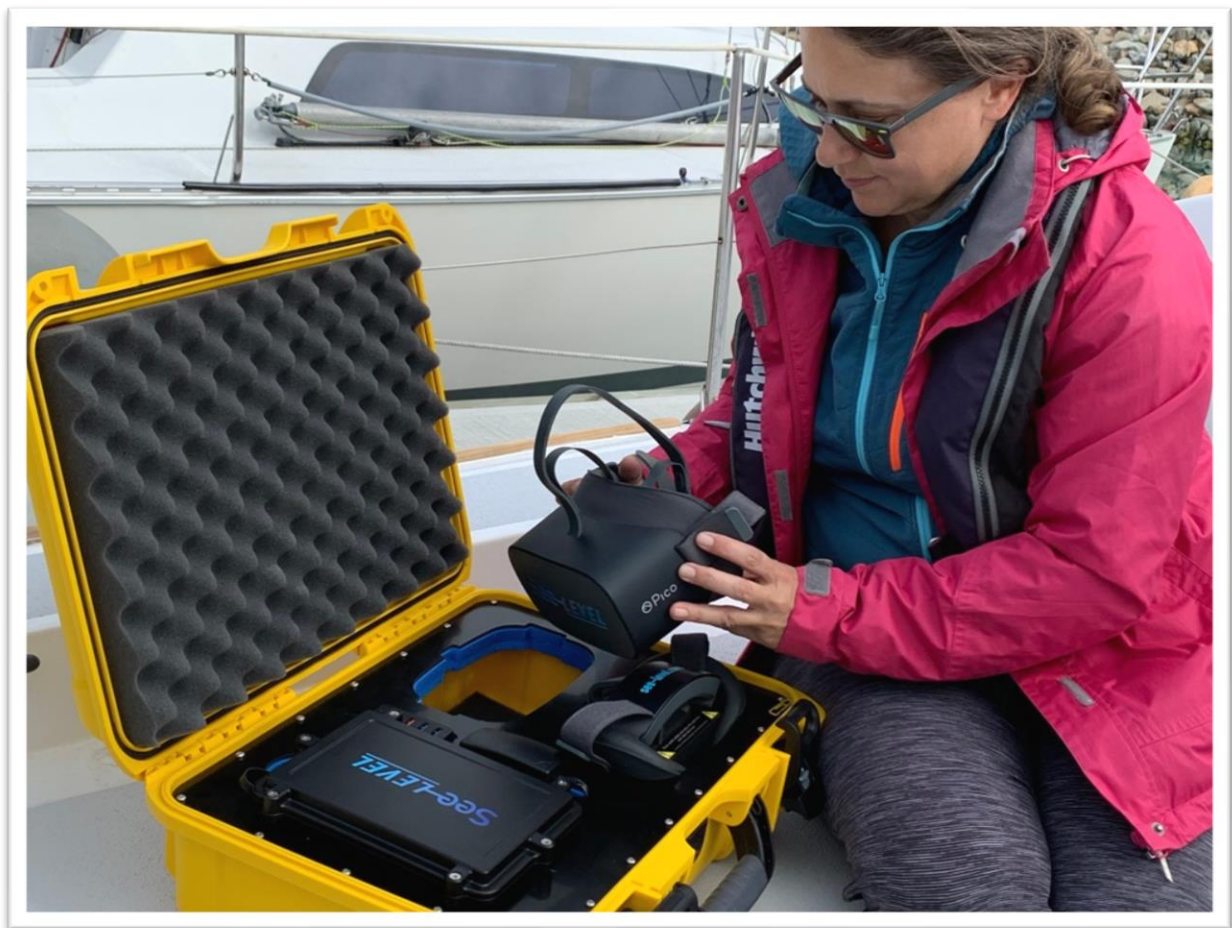


“This is incredible Dudley!” I exclaimed. “How does it work?!”

Amazing!

I thought it was great. Although I did feel like a bit of an idiot sitting on a boat with these goggles on. You do feel like you’ve got a blind fold on and you’re wondering what everyone is getting up to around you because you can’t actually see them. However I am sure that if you were actually feeling really sick you wouldn’t care what you looked like or what everyone else was doing and in fact you’d probably be quite grateful to feel like you aren’t actually even on the boat any more.

So of course while you are wearing the goggles you can't simply carry on sailing your boat, or walking around a ship or whatever. You need to be sitting or laying down somewhere safe. Dudley said that it takes about 10-20 minutes of sitting with the goggles on to make yourself feel better. It varies of course depending on how sick you were when you started. The idea is that when you start feeling the symptoms then you put on the goggles and bring yourself back to that feeling of normality. Then when you start to feel sick again, you repeat the process, then See-LEVEL starts its patented habituation training software. Gradually as time goes on your body should start to adjust to the conditions and eventually hopefully you won't be feeling sick at all.



Dudley and his wife Michaela took the See-LEVEL system away on an expedition vessel to the subantarctic islands and tested it out on various people in a variety of conditions with fantastic results.

So after years of development and testing, the new See-LEVEL system is ready for production and sales. It really is an incredible device, and I think will be life-changing for anyone who loves the ocean but suffers badly from motion sickness.

You can learn more about the product here. <https://www.see-level.com>
If you mention that you've seen See-LEVEL on the Astrolabe Sailing blog then they'll even give you a 10% discount!

