

How To Have A Perfect Boating Experience

# HOW TO HAVE A PERFECT BOATING EXPERIENCE

SELECTED TIPS - 83 PAGES!



83 Pages!

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## Kinds Of Boats

Let's start by identifying what exactly certain boats are. Sometimes the terminology can get lost on beginners, so we'll look at some of the most common boats and what they're called.

### **Bass/Fishing Boat**

These boats are exactly what the name implies. They are meant to be used for fishing. Most fishing boats are powered by outboard motors, and many also have a trolling motor mounted on the bow.

Bass boats can be made of aluminum or fiberglass. Aluminum is lighter and easier to maneuver thus requiring a smaller motor than would be required of a fiberglass boat. An aluminum boat is easier to transport and requires a smaller vehicle when towing on a trailer.

The most common size of fishing boats range between 16 and 20 feet long and provide anywhere between 50 and 200 horse power in the motors. Almost all will have bait and fish well for storing your catch as well as separate compartments to store rods, reels, and tackle.

Aluminum bass boats can be a little cheaper than the fiberglass variety with prices between \$7,000 and \$30,000 new depending on the package you choose. The most popular size of aluminum fishing boats is 17 feet with a 50 horsepower motor.

### **Pontoon Boats**

These are great boats to choose when you like to enjoy leisurely boating with a lot of people. They are lightweight vessels designed to make maximum use of space. They have wide open decks with lots of seating so they can accommodate large numbers of people.

Pontoon boats have a variety of uses. You can use them for fishing, cruising, and over night trips. Depending on the size of motor you have, it's not uncommon to be able to use a pontoon boat for skiing or tubing as well.

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These boats are very appealing to new boating enthusiasts because they are usually lower priced than other boats and they have a variety of uses. They are easy to customize to your unique needs as they are made in a variety of models.

## Buying A Used Boat

New boats are great to have. Just like new cars, there's something satisfying about knowing that you are the only person who has ever piloted that craft. Having something brand new is a great feeling, but it does come with a price tag! Many people, especially new boaters will want, instead, to buy a used boat which can be just as nice as a new one at a much lower price.

Some people are interested only in impressing others with their huge, flashy boat. The waters are filled with people who often have more money than brains. For these kinds of people the bigger and more opulent their boat, the better they feel.

When you really think about it, though, the real point for a boating enthusiast is to get on the water. A real boater is someone who gets his or her boat moving. There are plenty of small motor boats that are out every weekend as opposed to the big boats that only see the open water once or twice a season. The people in those small boats are real boaters. They know the benefits of boating and are eager to be on board their vessel as much as possible.

Most vehicles lose their new value quite quickly. Boats are no different. Within two years, it will only be worth half of what it was new. But their appearance and mechanical abilities will still be in good shape – especially if you are conscious enough to take good care of your boat.

That's why used boats are such a good value. You get a lower price and the previous owner has already "shook out the weeds" so to speak. Of course, not all used boats are good buys, so you do have to be careful what you look for in a used boat

Buying a used boat isn't like buying a used car. They really haven't been used very much when you think about the fact that boats sit most of the time. Don't think you are buying into someone else's problems. It's easy to find boats with less than a couple of hundred hours of engine use.

Used boats often come with dock lines, life jackets, spare props, safety equipment, and other nice add-ons. New boat owners have to pay several hundred dollars just to get this same equipment.

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Of course the wildcards with used boats are structural and mechanical condition and whether the previous owner did the proper maintenance. Prior to purchase you must get a used boat surveyed including a sea trial to be assured that it is in reasonable condition. You must also be willing to absorb mechanical repairs over time. The same is true when a new boat goes out-of-warranty.

You should allow an extra \$1,000 or so above the price you pay so that you can make any necessary repairs. This money is nice to have as well so you can pick up any incidentals that didn't come with your new used boat.

## **Boat Maintenance**

The most important part of owning a boat is taking care of it. You've probably spent a great deal of money on your new watercraft, so you'll want to make sure it is always running properly. That means knowing what to do to maintain its "health" – so to speak.

One of the keys to boat maintenance is also one of the simplest- wash your boat regularly. Not only does routine cleaning facilitate a more pleasant and organized environment, but it also goes a long way towards counteracting the long-term effects of environmental wear and tear.

Routine waxing and use of anti-fouling paint can also help protect your boat from the elements. You may also want to consider using environmentally-safe products for your boat maintenance needs!

One of the most common ways a boat can start to show scratches and damage is not only from when it's in use- but from when it's being docked. Make sure lines are securely fastened in place, neatly coiled, and do not show signs of breakage or wear.

Depending on the type of battery your boat uses, check to ensure that it is properly charged and that it has the correct fluid levels. Also be sure to keep your battery clean, as dampness and dirt can also drain your battery.

Proper boat maintenance means being actively involved in, and attuned to, all aspects of your vessel. This means keeping an eye out for everything from loose fittings to fraying ropes to any other areas of your boat that may need special attention or replacement. Many times, damages incurred to a boat could easily have been prevented by following a preventative boat maintenance routine.

Another crucial aspect of boat maintenance is ensuring that your bilge pump is functioning properly. There's much that can cause more irreparable damage to a boat than having it sink. In the event that you need to use your pump, you'll also want to make sure that your battery system contains enough power to support running the pump for a prolonged period of time.

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Many boating failures occur as a result of corroded electrical systems, so keeping electrical components dry should be a regular part of your boat maintenance routine. Electrical fittings can be protected with a water-repellant, non-conductive grease or corrosion inhibitor.

Making an investment in a boat cover can help keep your boat clean and free of a variety of contaminants that aren't just related to dirt or water- falling leaves and bird droppings can also cause a lot of damage if left unchecked. A boat cover can also prevent UV rays from breaking down hoses or fading carpets and upholstery.

Responsible boat maintenance means taking the time to familiarize yourself with all aspects of boat care. Consult your owner's manual for in-depth guidelines. While it's always important to take the time to learn how to do things yourself, also don't be afraid to seek the help of a professional when needed.

Motor care is probably one of the most important parts of effective boat maintenance. Follow best practices for both inboard and outboard motor care.

Be sure to flush your engine after every outing, and check everything from your fuel tanks to clamps on your fuel line for rust, damage or corrosion. Also be sure to check your oil both for correct levels as well as proper filtration and cleanliness. And keep an eye on your engine's cooling system to make sure it's functioning correctly.

## Emergency Boat Repair

Often, there are some things you can do to your boat if something suddenly pops up. You can do some patch work in certain situations that can tide you over until you can have your boat properly prepared.

First, you should have a basic tool kit on board. A few, well suited hand tools such as wrenches, screwdrivers, a hammer, vise-grips and pliers should be in your tool kit. Many marine stores sell tool kits in water-proof, floating boxes which are small, compact and convenient. You should also have a selection of basic spare parts. These should include belts, spark plugs, points, assorted hoses, fuel filters, impellers, etc.

When you are making repairs to your boat, do not stand up in your boat. The wake of any passing ships that come along when you are not paying attention can cause you to go overboard. Remember – safety first!

Here are some tips on what to do in an emergency to make repairs:

If your engine stalls, start from the obvious and work toward the more complicated solution.

Do you have fuel?

Have you run aground?

Has the propeller fouled with line?

Is the engine overheated due to no water flow?

Should you have a broken drive belt and not have a spare you can fashion one temporarily from some small line, the draw string from a bathing suit or a pair of ladies hose. Tie the ends together tightly with a square knot.

If you are losing engine oil, find the leak, catch the oil in a container and continue to pour back into the engine until you can fix the leak.

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You can repair a broken hose or pipe with rags or a tee shirt tied tightly with a line or a belt. Or duct tape may work.

If you find you are taking on water, first find the source. You should carry on board assorted sizes of tapered wooden plugs or bungs. If the water is coming from a through hull opening or small hole use the appropriate plug to jam into the opening. If the hole is large, use pillows, clothing, or blankets to stuff the damaged area.

## Boating With Children

Recreational family boating is a great way to spend time with your children. There are many tasks that can be assigned to youngsters to teach responsibility and being out in nature provides endless lessons for the young boater. Nonetheless, if youngsters are going to be joining you, there are a few features to at least consider when purchasing family boats.

You will probably want to have a boat with a cuddy cabin – space below where children can rest and/or get out of the sun. These can be good places for them to play also when they get bored as children almost always inevitably do.

A child's life jacket is very important and differs from the adult model in a few ways. When buying a life jacket for your child, get a good one with a collar that turns a child face up in the water. It must have strong waist and crotch straps, a handle on the collar, and preferably be a bright yellow or orange color for good visibility. Attach a plastic safety whistle to the lifejacket and teach the child how to use the whistle, and practice using it.

Because the life jacket can mean the difference between rescue and tragedy, you really need to pay special attention to getting one that will fit your child correctly and keep them safe. Here are some considerations you must address when picking out a life vest for your child.

Check with your state to find out what the mandatory age is for life vests. Some states say that children 6 and under must wear a life vest all the time while others have different age limitations. Even if the child you have on board your boat is older than your state's mandatory age, it's still a good idea to have ALL children on the boat wear a life vest all the time.

Believe it or not, the type of water you are on can make a difference in which life vest you choose for a child. Type II vests are made for lakes, bays, and oceans. PWC vests are more for shallow water conditions.

Infants (up to 30 pounds) should have a life vest with a hinged collar, a strong grab loop, and a sturdy plastic zipper and belt around the waist.

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For children from 5-10 years old weighing 50-90 pounds, you can choose a smaller version of the adult Type II vest depending on their size. Just be sure it fits well and even test it out to be sure the vest will do its job in case of an emergency.

Pack a cooler with lots of fluids like water and juices (such as apple or grape), baby bottles and sippy cups. Being out in the sun for extended periods of time, children and adults get dehydrated quickly. Stay away from sodas, because they contain sodium and can make you more dehydrated. Pack snacks that are not too salty or too sweet.

Even if you don't have infants, take a diaper bag or a backpack with extra changes of clothes, and make sure to bring a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses. Bring plastic bags to keep wet things away from dry things.

Depending on how much time you will spend on the water, your child may need a nap. Bring a small blanket or some towels and a small pillow and prepare a cozy place for them like in a cuddy cabin or a makeshift tent.

## **Boating Etiquette For Guests**

As a guest, there are a lot of things you can do that can not only bring about some good feelings, but also go a long way toward making things easier for the host or hostess. These are little things that can really mean a lot in the long run!

Offer to chip in some money for fuel. Gas can get expensive for a boat and the owner of the boat is already responsible for the everyday costs associated with boat ownership. Offer to pay for gas and your friend will appreciate you for it!

Think about bringing along food. If you're on a day outing, a simple picnic lunch will suffice. For overnight trips, you may take care of all dinners and let the host have lunch. Either way, bringing along food is a great goodwill gesture.

Help out whenever and wherever you can. But be sure to ask first. Show some interest in what the skipper is doing and have him or her instruct you on proper procedures.

During docking, be still. It seems like every time a boat gets close to the dock, you see people gathering up their belongings, moving about and getting ready to disembark. This can be distracting to the skipper, so just sit tight until the boat is moored.

Have the skipper of the boat let you know about safety procedures, if you don't know them already, and point out where safety equipment is located. If anything should happen to the pilot, it's a good idea for at least one guest to know how to summon for help.

Don't carry luggage or heavy items on with you. Boats can list severely when the weight balance is upset. Either put your heavy item on the boat first and then you get on or vice versa.

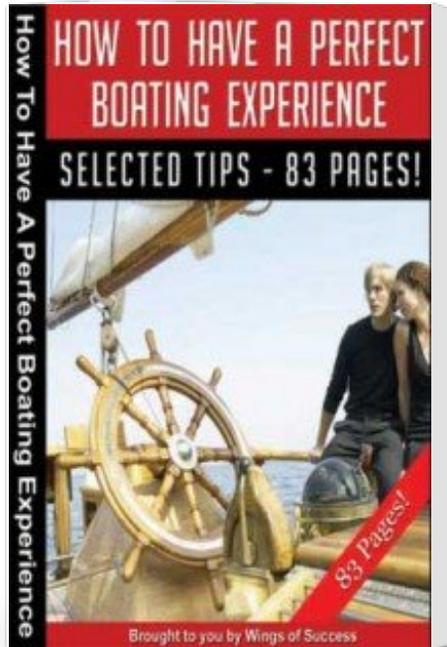
Offer to help clean up once your trip is done. It usually takes one person an hour or two to organize the equipment, clean up trash, washing off the boat, and other mundane activities that responsible boaters must do to take care of their boats.

## **How To Have A Perfect Boating Experience**

Be thankful that you have a friend who cares enough about you to bring you along on their boating excursions. They can be amazingly fun get-togethers that you will remember for a lifetime. But make sure those memories are good ones. Be a courteous guest, and do your part.

Boating is an excellent way for families to get together and spend time with each other. That means that kids will be along as well.

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