

Essential outboard motor maintenance

10 TOP TIPS



Barney's

MARINE

BOAT SALES & SERVICE

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Keeping your outboard in tip-top shape can be done even if you're not a mechanic. There is nothing worse than trying to run to shore to flee an incoming storm and hearing that all-too-familiar cough and sputter from the outboard. More often than not, just a little TLC and preventative maintenance could have prevented the fact that you are now bobbing around like a cork, pounded by waves and soaked by the torrential downpour.

If you are not a mechanic, talk to Barney and start every season with a professional tune-up. We can test the spark, run a compression test, pressure test the lower unit, check the seals and water pump, test the warning alarms and, in general, go over the motor in such a manner as to eliminate most causes of breakdown. After you have had your annual check-up there are many things that you can do to help assure that you make it through the season without being towed home.

Give your boat the attention it deserves with a bit of preventive boat motor maintenance to keep your motor running well and reliable for years to come.

1. Buy a set of "rabbit ears": two flexible rubber seals connected with a metal clamp. Slip the apparatus onto the lower unit where the water is picked up and attach a garden hose.
2. Start up the engine and let the water pump do the rest. (Practice safe boating and remember to stay clear of the prop and make sure no one tries to shift the motor into gear.)
3. While you're flushing the motor, check the water pump to make sure it has good water flow. Carefully put your finger through the stream of water. It may be warm, but it shouldn't be hot. If the output is not strong, you may have some debris stuck in the outflow tube. Immediately shut down the engine to prevent overheating and damage.
4. Insert a small piece of wire into the flow tube and work it back and forth. Start the engine again and check the output. If that doesn't solve the problem, you may need a new water pump.
5. Once you've finished the flushing and run the engine out of fuel, be sure to turn off the key and, if you have a battery switch, turn it off.
6. Take the engine cowling off and check for fuel or water leaks. If you find leaks, consult your safe boating mechanic.
7. Wipe everything down and spray with an anti-corrosive like WD 40 or Quick-lube. Be sure to lubricate all the moving parts such as the shift and throttle cables, carburetor valves, etc.
8. Replace the cowling and wipe it down. Keep a canvas or plastic cover on the engine between trips.
9. Always use fresh fuel. At the end of the season, boat motor maintenance should include draining your tanks and taking the fuel to the proper recycling authority.
10. Regular Maintenance
 - Periodically check the fuel line for cracks and worn spots.
 - Make sure the fuel primer bulb is not cracked and is pliable.
 - Make sure the fuel-line fittings seat properly and don't leak.
 - Check the clamps on the fuel line for rust or corrosion.
 - Check the fuel tanks for damage and corrosion.
 - Check the tank vent to make sure it aspirates properly.
 - Check regularly for water in the fuel.

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Troubleshooting chart

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Cause of problem?
•								Lanyard clip disconnected
•		•						Fuel Tank empty or vent screw closed
•		•						Fuel line not connected
•			•					Motor is cold
•	•	•	•		•	•	•	Fuel line pinched or kinked
•	•	•	•		•	•	•	Fuel filter in need of cleaning*
•	•	•	•		•	•	•	Air leak in fuel system*
•		•	•					Low speed mixture screw mal-adjusted
			•		•	•	•	Wrong oil in fuel mixture
	•		•		•	•	•	Wrong gasoline in fuel mixture
			•		•	•	•	Not enough oil in fuel mixture
•								Motor flooded
•	•		•		•	•	•	Spark plugs fouled or defective
	•		•		•	•	•	Wrong type of spark plugs
•								No Spark*
•	•	•	•		•	•	•	Weak spark or intermittent spark*
					•	•	•	Water pump failure*
					•	•	•	Cooling system clogged*
				•		•		Propeller damaged
				•	•	•		Tilt angle not correctly adjusted
				•	•	•		Boat improperly loaded
					•	•		Transom too low
				•		•		Transom too high
	•				•	•	•	Excessive spark advance
					•	•		Insufficient spark advance
				•	•	•		Propeller of wrong pitch or diameter

1 = Does not start

2 = Runs irregularly or misses

3 = Starts momentarily and cuts out

4 = Does not idle properly

5 = Motor speed faster than normal

6 = Motor speed slower than normal

7 = Does not develop normal boat speed

8 = Motor overheats

* = Inspection should be performed by an authorised dealer

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