

Read through our basic boat maintenance tips to learn best practices for responsible boat maintenance and care. Not only will proper boat maintenance extend the life of your boat and reduce the need for costly repairs, but it also helps ensure boating safety for all those aboard.

1. **Cleaning & Care**

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!

2. **Checklists**

There are a myriad of finer points to keep in mind when it comes to boat maintenance. The best way to ensure that you have all the bases covered is to follow a professional checklist. For in-depth checklists that include everything from boat motor maintenance to boat maintenance, be sure to check out the other pages of this section.

3. **Proper Mooring**

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.

4. **Battery Care**

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.

5. **Routine Inspection**

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.

6. **Boat Motor 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. Last but not least, keep an eye on your engine's cooling system to make sure it's functioning correctly.

7. **Bilge Pumps**

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.

8. Electrical Components

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-repellent, non-conductive grease or corrosion inhibitor.

9. Consider a Boat Cover

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.

10. Stay in the Know

Last but not least, 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. If you're new to boating, your boat dealer may know of helpful boating instruction classes that deal specifically with your type of boat. Become comfortable with boating terms and definitions. And 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.