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# *RV Packing Tips*



A sample of 'Stuff' that NEEDS on-board travel space.  
Piled high on the bed during renovations of Kastle #3

PLUS

## *RV Life Lessons*

AND

## *Easy Living Hints*

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By *Peggi McDonald* – Author of ... *RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
*"20-years Fulltiming is STILL Not enough!"*

## *Peggi's Other Publications*

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*RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Published May 04)

*RV Travel to Canada E-Book* (updated annually)

Details for both on [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net)

&

*Spirit of the Open Road*

(Her Best Seller – Out of Print)

Plus

*Peggi's columns can be read in numerous  
RV Magazines and Web E-Zines*

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Visit the McDonald's Website Today [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net)

*"20-years Fulltiming is STILL Not enough!"*

## Forward

Writing books and e-books would never have become my reality without the unending support of my husband John. His continual patience and assistance at every turn, including cooking meals and cleaning house to free up my time to spend at the computer is most appreciated. Thanks so much "My Love." I am so happy you are by my side!

Four good friends and Web Hosts of comprehensive RV Related sites took time out of their busy schedules to read and edit this e-book. My mind thinks faster than my fingers type and as a result I sometimes do not see the forest for the trees. With the help of this crew you are reading a complete comprehensive publication. Please take time to check out their websites - you will be amazed at what you find. I thank each of you from the bottom of my heart.

**Mark and Dawn Polk** of [www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com) & [www.rvuniversity.com](http://www.rvuniversity.com)  
Mark also designed my front cover  
**Les Doll** - [www.rverscorner.com](http://www.rverscorner.com) & [www.rvrepairmanual.com](http://www.rvrepairmanual.com)  
**Norm and Linda Payne** of [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com)  
**Steven Fletcher and Fran Crawford** of [www.RVBasics.com](http://www.RVBasics.com):  
[www.HomeIsWhereWeParkOurHouse.com](http://www.HomeIsWhereWeParkOurHouse.com) and several more

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**DISCLAIMER:** The tips and hints within these pages are presented to put your mind in motion, so you can come up with personal solutions. Many are favourites shared by others. I have not tested each of them, although I do use many of them. I will not accept responsibility as a result of your usage. To my knowledge these suggestions are safe to utilize, but please be aware that by applying these tips/hints you do so at your own risk.

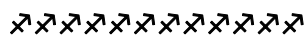
*Signed Peggi McDonald (Nov 2005)*

## RV Packing Tips

John and I have met so many wonderful people as we travel North America. During routine conversations with RVers we met, they shared their favourite tips and hints on how they keep 'things' in place. In this e-book I pass their favourites, and mine on to you - (originators of many hints are unknown). A few are shared from *RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* but many more are new and original.

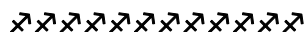
In my P&J Weekly Diaries by email during summer 2005, I also asked *RV Living.net* website visitors to share their favourites for insertion into this e-book. When possible, credit is given to contributors.

**NOTE: This e-book does NOT suggest what to pack. HOWEVER it does deal with HOW TO FIND SPACE for what you have on board**



## RV Life Lessons

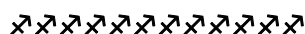
My latest publication *RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* features numerous Hints and Tips that came from many sources during our 20-years of Fulltime life on the move. However everyday it seems we continue to learn yet another convenient way to cope. I call these new ideas, tips and hints *RV Life Lessons*. In this section I share our latest 'RV Life Lessons' of this ongoing RV learning curve.



## Easy Living Hints

When our 9-year old motorhome was 'For Sale' in 2004, we searched far and wide for the latest ideas on how-to easily update and clean our unit to a 'like-new' condition.

While at *Encore Super Park Crystal River* last winter, each week I shared tips with park residents during the park weekly meetings. Before long, others contributed their favourites with me to pass along during my mini-seminars. Many of these tips and hints are featured in this section.



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# RV Packing Tips

Packing tips go on and on. What works for one RVer may NOT be an option for another? A wide variety of suggestions are mentioned throughout this e-book. Frequently these ideas may launch personal choices to modify your unit. Some tips/hints are from Crystal River park residents winter 04/05, BUT others are contributed by RV Living.net website visitors and the wonderful RVers we meet along the way... Enjoy.

## General Packing Tips

- ◆ **Small hangers** sold in the Dollar stores fit the less than spacious RV closets.
- ◆ In our previous motorhome, we drilled holes in **1” doweling** and attached it with long plastic ties to the ‘hanging triangle hooks’ in the RV closet. This round ‘rod’ made it easier to move hangers from side to side.
- ◆ When clothes hangers do not stay on the rack during transit, simply **reverse the hangers** so they hook from back to front.
- ◆ The **’S’ style plastic holder packaged with a new pair of socks** makes a perfect tea towel holder. Hook one end on the hanging rack in front of the stove and a tea towel on other end.
- ◆ Empty, sectioned **liquor and wine boxes** make versatile storage spots for shoes, file papers, craft supplies, etc. They fit well in outside RV storage pods.
- ◆ **Rectangular baskets** (under-the-shelf-type or wicker style, etc.) sit on RV upper cupboard shelves to keep glasses and small stuff secure. Place plastic items between breakable items.

## Shoes

- ◆ **Small round curtain rods attached to the base of the bed** or just above the floor level of walls create a perfect place to store shoes.
- ◆ Our friends cut strips of **pockets from a hanging shoe bag** and stapled them to the bed support to keep their shoes out of sight under the bed skirt.
- ◆ **Commercial-style bed frame shoe racks** are also available with wide hooks to hang on the bed frame – again under the bed skirt.

## Jewellery

- ◆ I keep **earrings** in small **2” zip style plastic bags** from craft stores - all bags of related colours are pinned together and store well in a flip-top box. Finally I wear the earrings I want – not a pair I find that match complete with backs.
- ◆ **Necklaces** either **hang on a hook** inside my bedroom cupboard door, OR I attach them with 'S' hooks to a sheet of **plastic craft mesh** – the mesh is secured w/screws.
- ◆ One more option is to place each piece in a small **snack-sized zip-baggie**.
- ◆ Another suggestion to prevent tangles is to insert one end of a **chain style necklace into a drinking straw** and attach clasp – hang it on a hook.

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- ◆ A **flat fishing tackle box** doubles as a good jewellery box – it travels well.
- ◆ A friend uses a round **flat splatter screen** to store her earrings. The handle already has a hole for hanging and all earrings are always visible.
- Another **added a corkboard** to her bathroom wall and hangs her chains, etc. on pushpins.

### Storing Clothes

- ◆ Frequently the space inside cupboards is high with a lot of wasted space. **By adding an extra adjustable shelf** the entire area can be utilized.
- ◆ Also add 2-3 adjustable shelves to your **RV's short and/or narrow shirt closets**. It definitely increases your closet space.
- ◆ A tip from a Florida park resident simplifies the task of adding shelves to the RV's **narrow bedroom shirt closets**. To avoid the challenge of installing shelf supports in the limited space, her husband cuts two pieces of **pegboard to fit the sides of the cupboard**. Simply insert shelf supports into the holes and **add plywood shelves**. The good part of this is there are NO holes to drill and when you change units you take your installation with you.
- ◆ **Rolled clothes eliminate creases**. Lay your clothes flat, then fold and roll tight. Store them in a clear plastic bucket so the rolls are visible.
- ◆ Another friend places her **folded clothes on the shelf, each separated with a sheet of cardboard**. They don't become rearranged when removing one item.
- ◆ She also stores **bedding and towels** the same way.

### Liquor Storage

- ◆ **Glass liquor bottles** remain safe and secure stored in the bottom half of cardboard milk cartons. Wedge plastic containers between the cartons.

*Peter and Anne Taylor (Ontario) sent me several tips.*

- ◆ **How to carry home made wine** (Always check with your planned border crossing if it is allowed – there is no hard and fast rule on this and it could be confiscated). When the Taylor's took wine south last year they declared it at Port Huron customs – the agent just said "Mmmmm, that sounds yummy".

They found a **wine rack at Canadian Tire that fits flat against the side of a basement storage pod**. The lightweight aluminium & wood configuration holds 30-bottles. During travels, cases of soft drinks or water stored in front keep the bottle in place.

*Jim and Penny Bateman (Ontario) also make home-made wine.*

- ◆ Jim keeps the **bladders that juice comes** in (also available from the local U BREW). He sterilizes them & fills the bladder with the finished wine from the bottles. They carry the bladder inside a box.

*NOTE: Be certain to remove all the air out of the bladder or the wine will begin to ferment. (This happened to friends).*

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## Games For Young Travellers

*Submitted by Marie Degaust. Ontario*

- ◆ I routinely use a large blue 'closed cell foam pad' under our mattress. When the grandkids are restless on a **less than perfect weather day**, the pad is placed on the floor. I have added a black and white checkerboard AND an 'X & O' game to this pad in black markers.
- ◆ Another option is to carry a **large supply of coloured chalk** so the kids can draw pictures on the other side.

## Special Camping Tips For Families

*Submitted by Cammie, (USA-by email) –  
they loved to visit Crystal River on a regular basis*

1. When travelling **with children, have them help in preparing the must-go list**. They can provide tips from food ideas, to storage, to don't take items. Have them make a list on paper. It is amazing what these young travellers can see as a need or as unnecessary.
2. Also, during down time, **make sure you have a board game that everyone (or mostly everyone) can enjoy**. You never know when a little rain will start and you lose TV signal. Always include the kid's ideas.

*Editor's note: When a 12-year old niece travelled with us from British Columbia to Ontario 2-years ago, she planned the trip – we just filled in the blanks. She found things we didn't know existed on this familiar route.*

## Keeping Your Kitchen (Galley) Organized

**(many favourites)...**

- ◆ To **extend working space in a kitchen** lay the sink cover over an open drawer during food preparations.
- ◆ **Large cutting knives** nestle in long narrow cutlery trays in a kitchen drawer.
- ◆ Place washed **plastic dishes/containers in the freezer overnight** – all unpleasant food odours vanish.
- ◆ To double your space, store small items in a **rectangular cake pan** above the main contents of a cupboard – either on a separate shelf or on top of dishes. If its resting place is flat, the pan should stay put.
- ◆ Some RVers **puncture cello-type bags (chips. etc.) w/pins** to remove unwanted air – this eliminates space.
- ◆ Home design stores sell a selection of **under-the-counter shelves and appliance holders** for Kleenex, paper plates, napkins, coffee pots and more. These are designed to fill this unused space.
- ◆ To avoid **damage to the wood frame from the steam of an under-counter coffee pot** – place a thin plastic cutting board between the pot and top frame.
- ◆ **Clothespins conveniently seal bags** such as chips or cereal.

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- ◆ I always add a **circle of packing bubbles between each dish**, pot and pan to prevent breakage and rattles. Noises are more irritating in a motorhome than in a towable. Using disposable dishes is not always practical and buying separate unbreakable ones is unnecessary.
- ◆ Many plastic covered wire holders are available **to keep dishes, etc in place**.
- ◆ **Thin paper plates or a layer of non-slip mesh** works equally as well.  
*FYI – our hand-painted dishes cushioned with plastic bubble circles have travelled unbroken in our RV for nearly two decade.*
- ◆ **John and I use silver wine goblets** for many drinks and desserts. They are unbreakable, travel well and keep drinks so cold. Using these by the campfire or picnic table make a big hit with all who see them.
- ◆ However, **china wine glasses travel safe** at the back or side of a cupboard if you stretch thin bungee cords across the stems – hook the ends into eyehooks.
- ◆ **Place breakable glasses in rubber or Styrofoam drink coolers** during travel.
- ◆ Colourful **acrylic patio glasses** are unbreakable. BUT do not place them on 'scootgard' (non-slip vinyl mesh) – it will mark acrylic.
- ◆ **Ribbed portions of worn out socks** make great travel booties for AL glasses.
- ◆ Our Florida neighbour, Ruth, cooks many meals ahead of time and **freezes them in meal sized plastic freezer containers (with straight sides)**. This way she can add many more delicacies to her freezer than if it was in store type packages. Just make sure there is NO forbidden food that would be confiscated at the border. Border contact info is available on [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net).
- ◆ During my weekly mini seminars (RV Life Lessons) at Crystal River, winter of '04/05' another RVer displayed her set of pots **with removable handles** that she bought at a garage sale. They take minimal storage space. Keep your eyes open for a bargain.

*Carol White, Webhost of [www.roadtirpdreas.com](http://www.roadtirpdreas.com) added these tips to the Happy Camper forum at [www.camphalfprice.com](http://www.camphalfprice.com)*

1. My best tip on packing your RV is to add everything to Zip-Lock bags. We have several sizes on board. It saves room in the RV, keeps any bugs out of things and if something leaks – it stays in the baggie. I take everything out of boxes and cut required recipe or content info from the package and include it into the bag.
2. I also seal liquid cleaning supplies in baggies to protect against leaks in case they fall during transit.
3. Baggies are great to store items such as medicines, recipes, small stuff, etc.
4. I even add hand wipes in baggies to the glove compartment or in my purse.

*Editor's note: Numerous sizes of disposable plastic containers are also perfect to store, cook, refrigerate or freeze a wide variety of must-have items.*

*'Freerider' from Happy Camper Forum presented this tip.*

- ◆ When we are RVing for any length of time I add a serving of cereal to a snack bag and store them in a gallon container. When my husband wants cereal at night, a serving size is conveniently waiting.

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*Deanna and Bruce Britt of Vancouver Island, BC  
submitted these kitchen tips:*

1. My solution to keep dishes and glasses safe plus rattle free is to use **China Protectors (quilted plastic zippered containers)** usually sold with foam plate dividers. Cup and glass protectors are also available. Look in the china department of quality stores such as Sears, Eaton's, Marshall Field's, etc.
2. I use **non-skid waffle liners in my cupboards** - even the glasses stay put.  
*Editor's note: {Available at RV dealers, Wal\*Mart, etc}*
3. **Large plastic vacuum bags, designed to hold extra bedding/out of season clothes** can be reduced in size simply by attaching a vacuum hose to a special designed opening. Look for these in the household section of large department stores or at some RV Dealers.

*Anne and Peter Taylor. Ontario submitted these next tips.*

1. **Small plastic baskets, approx 9x6x5**, from Dollar stores keep all the miscellaneous bottles & small cans together in food cupboard (vinegar, oil, etc.).
2. Anne **adds a protective layer between each dish and bowl**. But each special glass (pilsner, wine, margarita, etc) **nestles in individual old socks** (holes & all!!). To date, we have not lost one glass or plate due to travels.

*Karen Kasco, website visitor, 'packs her dishes' this way.*

1. As new RVers we decided to replace our china dishes with the bright **colourful plastic summer plates**. On short jaunts, it's 'Chinet'! No dishes to wash means more time for fun.
2. Her last act before jumping into the navigator's seat is to **stuff small pillows at the front of dish cupboards in her fifth wheel**. She does the same for the food cupboard to keep everything in place en route. *Anne Taylor also uses the pillow idea as well.*

## **Garbage - What To Do With It?**

RV kitchens are compact and where to put the garbage is always a problem. If placed in a cupboard, it uses precious space.

**Plastic grocery bags are extremely handy but difficult to store.**

- ◆ One space-saver option is a handmade **plastic garbage bag holder that hangs inside a cupboard or beside the kitchen window** (a sleeve about 14 inches x 18 inches with elastic top and bottom). One holder hanging on each side of the window along with a small flounce (frill) adds décor.
- ◆ Another option is to keep the bags in a **shoe box-style plastic container** with a lid. Stand the container on its end. (These containers can also be used for photos and craft supplies).
- ◆ An **empty paper towel roll** is one more space-saving container that holds two-dozen plastic garbage bags – stuff bags in roll, store roll anywhere.

**Where to put garbage containers**

- ◆ One RVer **attached a container** to the corner of her counter with small bungee cords and eye hooks.

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- ◆ If you have space, a **commercial plastic covered wire pullout garbage container** under the sink works great.
- ◆ An additional idea on how to **store garbage out of sight** -
  1. John copied this idea from our Kastle #1. He **cut a hole at the back of a deep cupboard** – the opening is equal to the wastebasket rim. The container must sit flush with the counter top.
  2. **Adding a wood frame** provides a finishing touch (OR you can also cover the raw edge with a border of MacTac type of covering).
  3. Stretching a colour co-ordinated strip of decorative **elastic lace to the top of the basket (over the plastic bag)** streamlines the appearance.
  4. Re-sizing a cutting board **as a lid** tops it off.
 

*NOTE: Lift the container for easy access to items at the back of cupboard.*

## This And That -

### *posting photos, controlling cords and much more.*

- ◆ **No wall space to hang family photos?** How about making a collage of favourites inside a cupboard door.
- ◆ The **front of your fridge** makes a perfect location **to display photos**. Attach each with double-sided scotch tape and cover the photos with a sheet of acetate available from craft stores - this stops the corners from curling – either tuck this thin sheet inside the doorframe or attach with push-pins, depending on the fridge surface.
- ◆ **Controlling electric/computer cords** is always a challenge.
  1. Old favourites such as storing non-connected cords in a decorated empty **toilet paper rolls** is one option.
  2. More recently I discovered that wrapping **elastic ‘ponytail holders’** (with bobbles on the ends) around cords and wires efficiently keeps them in place – especially all the computer cables/cords. These ‘holders’ have a million uses.

*Bob & Carole Tunnah from Nova Scotia expanded my idea with this tip...*

1. The **‘fat elastics’ designed to control hairstyles; ponytails**, etc. are more effective than regular elastics. Sold in bulk at the Dollar stores.
- ◆ **Bungee style stretch cords are an RVers best friend.** They keep almost everything in place during motion. More than 2-dozen are in use in our MH – from the thin 12” variety to the ‘fat 3-4 foot style’.
    1. The type with a **bobble on one end of an elastic circle** have even more purposes – from adding extra security to awning arms during travel to restraining lighting wires on the arms of our tow bar.
    2. **Make your own bobble-style mini bungees** by looping extra-large elastic around a small piece of dowelling in a half-hitch knot.
  - ◆ To **stop paper towels or toilet paper from unravelling during travel** – squash or flatten the rolls before putting them on the dispenser **OR** wrap a bungee around roll.

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1. **Removing items from shelves and walls** before moving is a pain. However, if you place a small 'button' of **window caulking putty** (called strip seal or fingertip caulking – from hardware stores) **on the bottom of objects**, nothing moves or falls from display position between destinations.
2. When this putty is applied to the **corners of picture frames** or other wall hangings, it prevents them from swinging side-to-side.

*NOTE: This putty holds more securely than sticky products specifically designed for this purpose.*

- ◆ I found pretty **hanging brass hooks with small nails at the back** - they only leave one to two small holes in the wall when removed, BUT these look so good you can leave them in place when you trade units. Look for them in hardware and regular department stores.
- ◆ Making up a **bed converted from an RV couch** can be difficult. Solution –place the fitted sheet over the back of the sofa before opening the bed flat.

## Unused Areas to Store Things

Unless you design and build your own 'Dream Machine', most RVs have many areas of wasted space. With a little effort it's easy to transform these out-of-the-way places into creative storage spots. **Do not overload – if an item goes unused for a year, get rid of it.** Try to make as many areas as possible operate as **Double Duty**. Each RV is different; check out each area of yours – you may find even more spaces.

### *Inside*

- Always look **above and below closets** – sometimes 'hidden' space is waiting behind a panel.
- About **4"- 6" of space, designed to cover hoses and wires** is available below. On Kastle #2 we discovered two long 8" high spaces under the bottom drawers of our night tables. By removing the **front decorative panel** we found a perfect place for shoes.
- There is considerable space **beneath most kitchen drawers**. This is a super place for cookie sheets, baking pans, etc – simply remove the drawers for full access.
- **Narrow, yet large items** like sewing machines can usually fit snug beside the dinette wall or corner of a bedroom.
- In Kastle#2, we found **two large hollow areas under each step** of our motorhome. We fabricated 'lids' using the carpet as a hinge (adding a piano hinge would also work). Perfect spot outside for muddy wet shoes, etc.
- There is abundant **space under most sofas** that can be transformed into drawer spaces.

*Del and Bob Bullen from an Explorer RV Club rally submitted this tip.*

- We use our **hidden space under drawers in the bedroom** for items that need to stay dry or cool such as prescription meds, important papers, etc.

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*Another tip from Anne and Peter Taylor*

- Peter built a bookshelf, but during transit, books ended up all over the bedroom. So **he fastened two-fancy hooks at each end about halfway down.** Before moving, I just stretch a bungee across – no more flying books.
- The open **decorative areas bordered with small railings** in many RV's can easily be framed to provide a closed-in cupboard.  
*Editor's Note; Manufacturers will also sell a matching cabinet door(s).*
- **Add décor to your motorhome steering wheel.** Cut the legs from a 20" round pressed wood (\$5.00) table so it sits secure on your motorhome steering wheel. Add a pretty cloth for an inexpensive, practical and personalized extra plus.

## Extending Your Living Space

These are a few of my favourite tips. Some have been featured in my various columns, books and newsletters, but I feel these too are worth repeating. Use them to make your home on wheels more comfortable and to extend space for all your 'MUST HAVE' treasures.

I can't stress enough NOT TO OVERLOAD. Be aware of your GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating), your GCWR (Gross Combined Weight Rating), NCC (Net Carrying Capacity), etc. The amount your unit can carry does have limitations. Always pack so everything is within easy access. If something is buried behind several other items you will simply never use it.

**We removed the built-in TV in our last motorhome** and covered the space with a factory-designed door. Our large floor model TV sat on the engine cover while parked and between the chairs while mobile.

**Laundry baskets** or the shopping buckets from places like Costco or Sam's Club are great organizers for use under the bed or outside storage in some units.

- ◆ With the wide variety of available **plastic containers and tubs**, there's certain to be one available for each task. For instance, items such as socks or underwear stay put when stowed in plastic tubs on a closet shelf.
- ◆ **Rectangular basket(s)** (under-the-shelf-type or wicker style, etc.) can sit on a cupboard shelf to keep glasses and small bits and pieces secure. Place plastic articles between breakable ones.
- ◆ **Square or rectangle lidded plastic tubs/buckets** stack well to double or triple space. We have five large opaque tubs in and around our outside entertainment centre. When the door is open the storage pod looks neat and organized.

*Wayne & Bonnie Kasper relayed*

- ◆ When they pack their 5<sup>th</sup>-wheel they **store 'unmentionables' and 'foldable' clothes** into a three-drawer, lightweight plastic see-thru chests from discount stores. Added plus – contents are visible and their compact designs take minimal space

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## *My ALL TIME Favourite - extra drawer/shelf space*

<p><b>To create extra drawer space</b>, attach an ordinary pocket-style shoe bag to the inside of a cupboard door. For stability, fasten elastic strips side-to-side across the pockets with screws to the inside door.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Works great to store screwdrivers, hammer, long knives, cooking utensils, scissors, etc. in the kitchen.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ And for shampoos, toiletries in the bath</li><li>◆ And for 'undies' in the bedroom</li></ul>
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Instead of lining the entire cupboard with **non-slip vinyl mesh** to prevent movement during motion – place **6” squares** between the cupboard and the pots/dishes, etc. When you pick up the last item you do not rearrange the complete cupboard.

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After our recent renovations I discovered that **lining the shelf** of our dish cupboards with **scrap carpet** added one more cushion of silent protection.

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Occasionally an RV will have **an overhead bunk**. If this isn't needed as a bed, remove the mattress; the resulting space is great to store shoes, dress clothes, bedding and more. If it is a dropdown style it may need support at the hinges to keep it in place.

### ***Additional Storage Tips***

- ◆ Another friend uses **empty beer boxes to hold towels** and face cloths neatly in place. She covers the cases with sticky vinyl shelving paper.
- ◆ **Wall-mounted racks and bookshelves** provide magazines and maps with a special place while eliminating clutter.
- ◆ A wide variety of **holders that attach to the wall** are available to hold remote controls, alarm clocks, drinks and much more. Look in the dollar and discount stores, reduced furniture places and thrift shops for these extras.
- ◆ **Plastic file holders fit neatly into spaces under the RV dash** or on the passenger side of your tow vehicle. These make a super spot to store maps and campground directories.
- ◆ To extend inside space, friends **built a shallow cabinet complete with casters** that nestles beside the table during transit and along a blank wall when the slide is extended – perfect for serving trays, photos albums and games etc.
- ◆ Other RVers added a **two-drawer cabinet over their gas motorhome engine cover**.

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*Les Doll, Webhost of [www.rverscorner.com](http://www.rverscorner.com) recently shared this tip in his periodic informative newsletter!*

**Extra shelf space** (from Trailer Life). We have a wardrobe and drawer on each side of our bed, but no nightstand space. **Cut a piece of 1/2" pine shelving several inches wider than the top of the open drawer – lay it across.** When the shelf is not needed as a nightstand, simply stow it against the wall or at the bottom of the closet.

This tip works in the **kitchen, living room** and anywhere there is a drawer and more work (or counter) space is needed. We painted with stain to match the trim and varnish to finish the boards for aesthetic reasons.

*Friends Dennis and Shirley, from Ontario had a neat idea*

They '**covered the blank slide wall**' with long narrow mirrors. What an impressive awesome way to expand space!

*Jim & Penney Bateman from Trenton Ontario submitted these tips*

1. Our Bounder has LOTS of **under drawer storage** including one beneath the bank of drawers/TV cabinet in the bedroom that is over 12 inches high. It gets filled with **cereal boxes, paper towels & anything else that is tall** but doesn't weigh much.
2. **Under the bathroom drawer** there is enough space for several boxes of square Kleenex, solid air fresheners, etc.
3. Our cat is on a special diet of Canadian Medical Variety Cat Food. This stuff is expensive and since it is her favourite I found an out of the way place under the **bedside cupboards to store a dozen cans.**
4. This space could also be used for **important papers**, etc.
5. The **linoleum flooring in the kitchen covers the entire motorhome** so all under-drawer spaces have a proper floor, not just plywood, plus it is easily cleaned. I've pointed out this wasted space to many RVers.
6. In addition our closets are across the back of the motorhome. **Under the closet there is a space more than 3-cubic feet that is empty!** We access it by lifting the carpet on the driver's side and cutting the flooring (this is only paneling & easily done with a carpet knife). A couple of reinforcements around the top & a piece of cord through a small hole in the flooring & I have a hatch for easy access.
7. The carpet just lies loose on top. It is a great spot for extra pillows, bedding, etc. that we need only occasionally but hate to be without if we have company.

*Editor's note: Many RV's have hidden places like those above – look closely at your unit for 'empty places'.*

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Transform your RV into a comfortable home -  
so you won't miss your other home.  
Utilize every nook and cranny that you can find to extend space.  
**BUT DO NOT OVERLOAD!**  
Don't pack things so deep you must dig for them.  
Buried items are rarely used.  
Eliminate non-necessities to FREE-up space for  
'can't-live-without' extras

## Look for Items That Serve More Than One Purpose

### *Such as these temporary clothes racks*

- ◆ Add a **removable clothes bar** to your shower. This extends closet space plus clothes are easily removed when it is shower time. We did this for 8-years.
- ◆ To air-dry clothes inside, place a **tension-spring-bar** across a doorway.
- ◆ We have a washer/dryer on board and before bed we **hang T's and shirts on the frames** of the upper cupboards in our living room.
- ◆ **OR place a triangle folding clothes dryer** in the shower to dry wet bathing suits. Move it to the patio on a sunny day to dry towels, etc. We attached a similar unit to the **rear of our coach with bungees** when we are stationary.
- ◆ Some RVers **manufacture clothes racks for back ladders** using 1" PVC pipe.

### *A Few more tips that serve 'DOUBLE DUTY'*

- ◆ Store folded blankets, jackets and sleeping bags neatly **inside pillowcases**. They make great 'throw pillows' to add a decorative touch to your furniture.
- ◆ **Tinted windows** (available after market from window repair companies) contribute to privacy as well as reduce heat caused by the sun's glare.
- ◆ One of my all time favourites – add **café-style curtains** to the bottom portion of RV windows. They add warmth to the décor as well as enhancing daytime privacy. The fabric on the windows between the blinds and the glass cuts down on humidity.

*NOTE: Hang a 1" wooden rod with drapery hooks in the valence fabric OR attach the rod with brackets to a window frame. Add lace café style curtains.*

### *Several of My Can't-Live-Without Ideas*

- ◆ When you **don't have a large cooking pot** for corn on the cob, stew or roast chicken, consider using your electric frying pan. It also makes a great oven to bake a cake or pie. Using it outside to cook food with an odour like fish is as convenient as it is in the galley.
- ◆ A **meat baster** simplifies filling batteries.
- ◆ **Bread and baked goods stay fresh** longer when placed in a plastic tub (to catch crumbs) and stored inside your air-tight microwave or oven.

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- ◆ To **firm up an RV sofa**, try adding a 1/2-inch board between the couch and top cushions. In our Kastle #3 we **replaced the sofa** with two round bottom loungers (anchored with seat belts when we are in motion).
- ◆ Another suggestion to improve RV furniture - one friend **used oversized heavy duty elastics to join groups of springs together** on her sofa – the springs then worked as a unit for greater support.
- ◆ **Eliminating magazine clutter** and finding a place for large books such as an atlas can be a challenge. Consider storing them under the dinette or couch cushions (on top of the board mentioned above).
- ◆ Make a separate **working area for sewing or crafts, etc.** – cut the two back legs of a folding card table so they rest over your knees and sit on the back of the couch. Be sure the top is level when the two front legs rest on the floor.
- ◆ Adding a strip of **heavy-duty Velcro (needle side) to the underside** of the throw rug helps prevent it from ‘walking’.
- ◆ **Rubber backed rugs** leave a stain on acrylic and hard surface floors.
- ◆ **Short narrow cutlery trays sit on the medicine cabinet shelves** to keep small prescription bottles firmly in place. Fill the gap between the tray and cabinet wall with flat bottles or boxes. The advantage of using these trays is nothing lands in the toilet when the door is opened after a rough ride.
- ◆ A friend **adds a 3-inch strip of Plexiglas** in front of each medicine cabinet shelf.
- ◆ For tall bottles, she places a **spring-loaded bar across the shelf**.
- ◆ Other RVers attach **strips of elastic across these shelves** to avoid an avalanche that ends up in the toilet when they open the door at destination.
- ◆ Finding a place to **store papers and interesting articles** on future places to visit was always a challenge. Now we file each in page protectors and place related items in a binder. We store them in the cupboard over the couch. Be sure to eliminate old information. **Accumulation adds to excess RV weight.**
- ◆ **Car-type litterbags** are perfect holders for maps and other travel information.
- ◆ **To accommodate large plastic sports bottles** in most RV/vehicle cup holders, insert a dual size piece of PVC pipe with one 3” end one 4” end into the existing holder. The small end fits the holders and the large end supports the bottles in an upright position.
- ◆ **‘MacTac’ or car striping** helps to coordinate many things – OR to add a touch of décor. In Kastle02, I **fabricated a bathroom shelf from Plexiglas** and mounted it on brass brackets over the toilet. A window repair facility sold and cut the piece of Plexiglas (8” x 24”) for me. They also heated and curled the front edge so that items would stay put during vehicle motion. I trimmed the curled part with gold and black car striping for a classy look to my creative modification.

### ***Outside Packing Hints***

*Some from RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*  
– but important enough to be repeated

- ◆ **Keep a bag of tools accessible** from the passenger side of your RV for emergency use – one idea is to store them in a small plastic bucket.

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*RV Packing Tips*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

- ◆ **Large lidded tubs** stack well in basement storage areas. They look good when a storage pod is open at a campground.
- ◆ If space is available above the tubs it is a good spot **for pool noodles, chairs, or unusual sized items.**
- ◆ PVC pipes are easily installed in a storage pod or on a back bumper or along the roof. Depending on the circumference, these can be used for **fishing poles, cleaning brushes, extra sewer hoses, etc.**
- ◆ **Slide-out trays** are available in a wide variety of shapes to fit outside storage pods. Pulling the tray out provides access to contents in the compartment
- ◆ If your unit has a **peg-board or a panel in an outside storage pod**, remove it to see what is behind. Sometimes the panel is there to protect hoses and wires however it could be hiding a mega amount of useable space as well.
- ◆ **To retrieve those hard-to-reach items** buried in tight spaces between compartments, one friend carries a rake – John uses the awning stick.

*Norm and Linda Payne of [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com)  
submitted two convenient shelf designs. (See photos on cover)*

*Modification #1* – In a front passenger pod, adding large plastic coated wired shelves **increases space for lawn chairs, rugs, sun-screens, vacuum cleaner, a table**, etc. When installed with the lip up, it prevents items from rolling out. Previously things were tossed in – when the door opened, it all fell out.

*Modification #2* – **In front of the fresh water tank there is six inches** between the pegboard (covering the tank) and the bay door. I installed two shelves 5 1/2 inches deep to hold cleaning supplies, oils, etc. Everything is handy and no searching.

*Debbie and Rodney, North Bay, Ontario submitted this tip.*

- ◆ We bought **rope lights** (found in abundance at Christmas – on sale afterwards) and **wrapped them around our awning arms.** It provides great lighting, and helps those of us, personally speaking, who forget the brackets are there and bang their heads at least once a day.

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*RV Packing Tips*

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## Pre-Trip Packing Ideas

### Security Concerns

#### Before You Depart To Change Destinations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ It is also <b>not a good idea to travel with vent covers open</b> unless they are covered with a 'Max-Aired' style cover. The wind pressure can detach the vent cover – causing damage to an adjacent vehicle.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Speaking of wind – it is also a good idea to add <b>a bungees to each awning arm</b> for extra restraint. We even add one, as well as add Duct tape to our <b>front window awning roll</b>. This prevents it from unfurling during windy driving days,</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Always <b>raise your coach blinds</b> during travels, especially if the windows are open. If not the blinds can and will become damaged.</li><li>◆ <b>Only open the front windows</b> during transit in a motorhome – if the back windows are open, harmful fumes can be pulled into the unit.</li></ul>
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#### Always Touch The Item

*Walter, our neighbour in Florida* last winter was a plant safety retiree. He relayed that many RVers routinely use checklists – however if they do not physically touch the item they are mentally checking off – they may miss seeing a potential problem. **By touching it you have to be close enough to take a good look.** This practice is a standard part of industrial safety training.

#### Lock RV Doors

**Always lock your door in a campground** when you leave your unit even if you are in a comfortable park. In *RV Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* I relay numerous stories about 'break-ins?' – it is soooo easy to let your guard down.

Just for info **the only secure lock on your RV door is the dead bolt.** The lock in the door handle is frequently locked or unlocked with a **master key** because many RV manufacturers use the same key for that lock.

**Hide a key** outside your coach for emergency entry. If you misplace your keys as much as I do it means you do not have to find a way to 'break-in' during an emergency.

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## Lock Your Storage Pod Doors During Transit

*Contributed by our neighbour Sally from Crystal River*

Most **outside storage pod keys** are also interchangeable from one unit to another. Unless you change these locks keep your valuables out of these compartments. One more point - **ALL RVer's should lock their outside storage doors before departure** – even if the 'contents' are not valuable. When a rig recently pulled out of the park, a pod door flew open as he turned the corner at the gate – EVERYTHING ended up on the roadway.

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## Securing Drawers in Transit

If you have drawers that do not stay closed during driving motion, try **placing the handle of a fly swatter through the handle of the drawers**. We have used this for years and it works like a charm.

## 'Restraining' cupboard doors

Our upper cupboard doors open sideways. The former owner fabricated **6" 'wands' (1/2 dowling with a rubber 'boot' on each end)** We simply remove the boot and place the wand under the handles and replace the rubber boot. This way the cupboard contents stay put on rough roads.

## Where To Securely Stow Valuable Treasures

John and I along with many RVers have some kind of **safe (secure hiding space) on board**. As an alternative we keep important, but not necessarily valuable papers such as our medical coverage, etc. **in our freezer** because this is the last place to burn. Yes it is the first place a crook will look, but as I said they are important to us but not of any value to someone else.

In 21st CENTURY I suggest many hiding **places to keep your valuables**. I repeat a few popular ones below...

- ◆ **Bury valuables in food containers like coffee, cereal, etc.**
  - ◆ **OR in a reservoir buried behind an artificial light switch/receptacle.**
  - ◆ **Attach small bottle tops to the underside of the top shelf of a cupboard** – add the valuables to the bottles and connect to the lid.
  - ◆ **Install a fire resistant safe in an out-of-the-way place.**
  - ◆ **Buy a 'California' style safe (It looks like a spray can of cleaning supplies but with a false bottom.** Stow it with other cleaners.)
  - ◆ **Be creative, make it difficult – a burglar wants to be in/out in a HURRY.**
- NEVER** discuss the location of your hiding spot. Someone could overhear where your 'buried' cache is kept.

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*RV Packing Tips*

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# RV Life Lessons

This list seems to go on and on. A day hardly goes by that we do not learn something new. Below are a few of many recent RV Life Lessons we feel are worth sharing.

## Our Day to Day 'RV Life-Lessons' Continue

### Living With A Luxurious High-End Old-Fashioned Icebox

**In 1990** 2-days after we settled into central Mexico, our **7-year old Dometic fridge began to leak ammonia**. In-park service was NOT available NOR was RV Repair available within 200 miles. Finally an RV tech (too busy for a service call) told us how to drain the ammonia and how-to use the fridge as a classy old-fashioned icebox. We had two choices, either to return the 1500 miles to the US for a replacement – **or to live with it. We did just that for 3-4 months**. With our classy icebox the only thing we missed was a freezer; we just shopped more often.

**In 2004 our 10-year old Norcold quit working** while we were in Florida. No big deal, we knew how to save the day – ‘been there, done that’ so to speak. In both cases these units were so well insulated that by spreading **three-bags of ice in large zip-lock bags in the main portion and/or the crisper area and another two to three in the freezer**, the entire unit remained a constant 40°F. **One large unopened bag nestled on the middle shelf** – on a bath towel over a thin plastic cutting board for support. This bag lasted three days – we changed the towel daily.

John BBQ'd the thawed steaks and burgers so they would stay safe to eat (if we kept them cold for several more days). I filled an ice bucket with layers of bagged ice between layers of cooked meat. As the ice melted I added fresh ice to a plastic bag and placed it inside a zip-lock one – **multi-bagged ice** last longer.

In 2004 it took five days for the new unit to arrive to our area of Florida. Replacement of the ‘cooler only’ was also available at a slightly lower cost. BUT we would still have an ‘OLD’ fridge with additional parts that could fail at any time. Rebuilt fridges are also available through some dealers, but not necessarily in the area where the failure occurs.

FYI – RV fridges have a life of 7-10 years. Maintenance insurance policies are available to cover replacement and expenses such as this but these can be quite costly – most run 5-years. Look at what is offered – then decide if such a policy will be money well spent.

### Fridge Tips

- ◆ **Never line fridge shelves** with anything – it hinders air circulation. But to avoid scratching of the shelves, I **attach a piece of non-skid mesh with an elastic band** to the bottom of every glass and metal container. Shelves are protected and nothing moves when I forget to arrange the fridge for travel.

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*RV Life Lessons*

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- ◆ The **freezer** in Kastle #2 was one huge compartment. I purchased a simple one-level plastic-coated shelf to organize this area.
- ◆ Adding a small **battery operated fridge** fan helps circulate the air to enhance effective cooling.

*Agathe and Yvon Vallancourt submitted their favourite tips*

- ◆ To '**Clean the Fridge**'. – Mix a solution of two-tablespoons of **baking soda in a quart of warm water**. Wipe down the entire surface.
- ◆ To remove **mould growth** from the door gasket – wash with a weak solution of **bleach//water**. Do not put refrigerators parts in the dishwasher.
- ◆ **NEVER use a heat gun or hair dryer to defrost.**

### **Costly Invoices From In-Park Service Techs**

- ◆ When dealing with in-park repair – even for expensive items such as our refrigerator. **ALWAYS ask before service is begun if credit cards are accepted.** Some credit card companies charge small businesses an extra 5% service fee – it may be passed on to you or come out of the techs profit.

### **How We Drove Safe - Without Taillights**

When our **brake lights quit functioning**, we had two choices – to be **towed** to a repair facility OR to **drive 50-miles without brake lights** when the car and the motorhome were connected. We decided to **disconnect the car** (lights were working on car) so I could drive 'shotgun' from the rear. We each had a 'walkie-talkie'. When John wanted to apply the brakes he let me know by 'voice' plus he put on his 4-ways. This system worked well during our short distance but I sure wouldn't have wanted to drive 3-days to Canada this way.

Twenty-four hours later, another lighting problem surfaced. This time we only had to drive 10-miles for assistance. We simply stayed away from everyone and this time we drove connected using our 4-way flashers as needed. However being aware that we can travel with limited lighting in a safe way (me as the guide) is one more RV Life Lessons of 2004/05.

### **Rubber Gasket On Propane**

Last winter our **rubber gasket on the horizontal tank-fill valve** stayed on the propane nozzle of the truck that filled our tank. Without this gasket it was impossible to add propane into our tank. We didn't realize this gasket was missing until we tried to fill up with propane.

Thankfully the missing rubber ring is **available from most propane dealers**; ours was replaced at no cost. Apparently it happens frequently – this was a first for us in 19-years.

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*RV Life Lessons*

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## **Our 16-Yr Old Dachshund (Maddie) was attacked by fire ants.**

Our senior 16 year-old four-legged 'baby' (now 17) doesn't walk as well as she used to – occasionally she drags her butt. One evening she apparently **disturbed a fire ant nest**. These critters only BITE if their nests are disrupted, but they STING for a long time. From personal experience I know the pain she felt.

She wouldn't stop 'screaming' at bedtime. It was near midnight and I was beside myself trying to find a solution to relieve her distress. We thought the small bumps on her skin was 'dirt'; but in a warm shower the water run-off turned RED. The 'dirt' was actually **scabs from fire ant bites**. Following her shower, a liberal rubdown with cocoa butter cream finally settled her down and she finally fell asleep.

I called my breeder the next day searching for a solution – she suggested I **always have a bottle of Benadryl (liquid) Elixir – (a histamine blocker) on hand to combat bug bites, bee stings, etc.** She recommended one adult dose should reduce all swelling and discomfort - a children's dosage can be doubled.

## **Leaving An Open Can Of 'Pop' Outdoors**

Another Florida neighbour relayed that she left an unattended **OPEN can of pop on the picnic table**. When she took a drink, the yellow-jacket bee that had taken up residence stung the top of her mouth. She felt fortunate that she had a bottle of **histamine blocker** on hand (see Maddie's attack by fire ants above). Other than the pain, she didn't have to deal with swelling from an allergic reaction.

*NOTE: For pets or people it is ALWAYS a good idea to have a bottle of Benadryl histamine blocker on hand to combat reactions from insect bite, poison ivy, etc.*

## **Banking In A Country You Are Visiting**

This special info tip is mainly for Canadians but the reverse applies to American visitors to Canada.

For years I have been using my Bank of Montreal client card as a debit card to buy **groceries, purchases and for taking 'cash-back' while in the USA**. It was great to no longer need to pay ATM fees PLUS Canadian Bank fees.

Now when I go through the cash, I ask to make a test payment. Your card may or may not work; if not, then use an alternate payment. Occasionally the debit action in one store will not function; although later the same day it will transact as normal. If it stalls in one place, try at another store.

Because I take 'cash-back' I no longer use ATM's in the USA/or Canada. The **cost of using these machines, plus what my bank charges add up**. When my client card doesn't connect I simply use Master Card and then transfer funds by telephone banking or Internet banking the next time I'm on-line.

Just for Info – foreign **banks will honour all transactions IF??? you open an account in the country you are travelling in**. This may and may not always sit well with RVers who move from place to place throughout several countries – just be aware it is an option.

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*RV Life Lessons*

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## Keeping Landlines Safe During Storms

During one intense summer storm, the hail, winds and rain were so wild that I unplugged my computer – even though we have a ‘power line monitor’ on board to protect against power surges and brownouts. I never thought about disconnecting the ‘plug-in’ connection to my dial-up modem.

You guessed it – **a surge hit the phone line and damaged a two-part modem on my laptop.** Thankfully my computer was under warranty because it took three separate appointments at Future Shop computer repair, over 2.5 weeks period for parts to arrive and repairs to be completed.

*RV Life Lesson* – **ALWAYS UNPLUG A DIAL-UP MODEM WHEN YOU ARE NOT USING IT**, unless it is plugged into the phone connection of a surge protector power bar.

## Maintenance Routine

Whether your RV is new or pre-owned, to ensure you **receive hassle –free follow-up maintenance** the following contributes to a satisfied service experience.

1. **Make an appointment** by phone – explain each item for service or repair.
2. **Have a list** for the service staff – specific problems stated in writing are more accurate than verbal requests.
3. **Add the VIN, model number and the odometer** reading.
4. As a rule, **don’t ask for extras** the day your unit is in for servicing. Techs work by appointments and generally there won’t be time available to schedule items not already allotted to work orders.
5. Remember that during spring and summer, **dealers are extremely busy.**

*NOTE: If you stay with your RV during repairs, the service is frequently faster than if you leave it for pick-up later. Staff tries to complete the work of visible customers first – just to get you on your way. Many shops will not allow owners to be in the work area due to insurance regulations - expect to spend time in the waiting room, not in your unit.*

## Maintenance Service On The Road

*Norm and Linda Payne from [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com) shared this tip.*

Ask neighbours or **just stand outside looking at the problem area and scratch your head a bit.** Soon a neighbour will come to your aid. Norm (and many other RVers) carries a selection of tools and test equipment plus some spare parts in his unit. He is often able to fix his neighbours problem.

*This series are from Fellow RVers we’ve met over the past 20-years.*

If your tow or towed vehicle and/or your home-on-wheels require TLC, the following tips may help you find a quality repair facility.

- ◆ **Ask a seasonal RVer or campground staff** where they have repairs done.
- ◆ **Call your emergency road service (ERS)** for a recommendation. Always keep your ERS *contact* number plus a contact number for your RV dealer close at hand.

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*RV Life Lessons*

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Many vehicle manufacturers provide **toll-free 'hot-line' assistance** – listed in the operating manual. Make sure that these numbers work on both sides of the border and from the area you are travelling. Also ask for the regular phone number as a back up.

- ◆ **If your engine needs attention**, take your unit to a specific manufacturer dealer, **your tires** to a speciality shop, etc.
- ◆ Many times it is more economical to have **an oil change** done at a quick turn-around service centre.
- ◆ If your RV needs repairs, call **in-park service** (usually an extra service fee but less per hour), or take it to an **RV dealer**. Always **make an appointment** at an RV dealer before you show up at their door.

### **On-Line Repair Help For Basic Repairs**

The Internet is such a powerful tool and by using a search engine you can find almost anything to help the novice RVer. I have NO mechanical expertise and John only takes care of routine things – for everything else **we call for help**.

However, when the water in our toilet would not completely shut off late one Saturday evening – it was too late to call a technician and Monday was a long way off. So I went on line and typed the **toilet make and model into the Google search bar on our website at [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net)**

Immediately a link to a PDF file popped up with **a complete instruction booklet** containing a simple diagram of parts and their locations plus what to do to fix the problem. Repairs for some models are quite simple and our china bowl toilet fell into this category. We printed it for future reference.

This *RV Life Lesson* reassured me that some things in the house portion of an RV need attention from time to time, especially 'after-hours' or over a weekend. Do not hesitate **to look for help on the Internet** – you may be surprised at what you will find.

### **In Park Service**

On another occasion we used 'in-park service' to **repair our electric transfer box (switches between 30-50 amps)**. It also controls both the genie operation and the inverter. When we tried to use our generator a week later while dry camping at a rally several hundred miles away; it powered up OK but no appliances would function.

During the service call, our tech had run into a few problems although he didn't quit till everything was working as expected. He even tried the generator and it powered up without problems – although none of us thought to check if the inside electric appliances were working under generator power.

In a panic on a late Sunday evening we left a message with Bob, the Florida tech asking what we should be doing or what type of tech should we call to fix the problem. Very early Monday morning Bob called to apologise plus to inform us **that there is a second breaker on the back of the Gen-set**. He had turned off this switch when he was working on the Power Line Monitor and he simply had not switched it to the 'on' position when he finished the installation.

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*RV Life Lessons*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

Our *RV Life Lesson #98* is to **routinely check that ALL systems are working AFTER a repair is completed** to avoid surprises when you are 200-miles down the road. Always ask the tech if there is any hidden things he did that you were unaware of. This way you can avoid surprises after you leave the vicinity of the repair.

### **Emergency Road Service (ERS)**

One more *RV Life Lesson*. Those travelling without an Emergency Road Service policy – **NEED TO GET ONE!!!!** The cost of one tow will generally be higher than the price of an annual policy. **Each year we have one or two calls on either the car or the motorhome.** RV Clubs sell these policies and maybe your Insurance Company does as well. Shop around because each policy offers different benefits.

Mainly you want.

- ◆ **Unlimited service calls**
- ◆ **Towing for unlimited distance – to a reputable facility**
- ◆ **Two tow-trucks if required (one for tow vehicle plus one for the towable).**
- ◆ **Be sure either the member or the RV owner team are covered for service.**

*NOTE: None of us know when a mechanical problem will surface. A \$1000.00 repair is not uncommon – nor is a major breakdown.*

Remember your **RV is both a house and a vehicle – so breakdowns do happen.** If you set-up a \$5000.00 EMERGENCY FUND there will be no need to stretch your day-to-day travel money to pay for repairs. Our fund is a zero balance credit card that we can use to buy us time. We can make minimal payments till we have a chance to rearrange funds.

### **Contingency Fund**

**THIS** is the other half of the Emergency equation. At the time of purchase it is also wise to set-up regular deposits in a **Contingency Fund**. Yes, your new RV is under warranty but do not expect every item to be a no-cost repair. **The length of time that each repair will be covered by the dealer/manufacturer will vary.** If you travel for a few years trouble free, the FUND will have grown to make buying new tires or batteries or additional accessories much easier.

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*RV Life Lessons*

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# Easy Living Tips

## Tips to Know if Buying from a Dealer

- ◆ On our LUXOR MH the dealer added **an extra bank of cupboards** over the couch. It was wasted decorative space with no purpose. Friends asked their dealer to add cupboards within their slide area.
- ◆ The carpenter also added a computer station (see [computer offices](#) page #47)
- ◆ Don't hesitate to ask a dealer to complete these options at the time of purchase – **before you negotiate on the overall price**. However keep an eye on the weight these changes may add.

## Cleaning

### Dealing with Pets

John and I have two dogs and any pet owner knows it is a constant fight to **stay on top of the odours from the cat(s), dog(s) AND from any accidents**.

- ◆ Our dogs are OLD – Maddie 17 and Katie is 11. **Our easy-clean leather furniture, vinyl plank floor and washable throw rugs** simplify the removal of pet odours.
- ◆ Their doggie-beds are **washable bed pillows w/cases**.
- ◆ **Plastic lined 'pet pads'** between blankets (large colour coordinated bath towels) helps eliminate extensive washing. We only have a small amount of carpet by the front chairs, doorway and bedroom – a 'Pet-Pad' under throw rugs covering these areas is an added plus to cleaning.
- ◆ In pet stores, grocery stores and Wal\*Mart Canada/USA, I found great spray products to **control pet odours** on fabric, carpet, washable floors and much more. These pet products are also very effective when I 'spray-wash' my vinyl planking floors.
- ◆ We also **spray this cleaner on carpet** at the coach entrance to eliminate any traces of odours. It adds a daily fresh scent to their beds and chair pillows.
- ◆ Another tip to **remove pet accidents from carpet** – pour a liberal amount of club soda on the spot. Wait 5-minutes and soak it up with towels.
- ◆ For a more complex selection of **easy to use cleaning accessories** visit Mary Moppin's Cleaning solutions at [www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm](http://www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm)
- ◆ Our dogs **settle into a cage** when we are not home. This cuts down big-time on accidents or problems when they are alone.

*Next three tips submitted by Lianne Durant, Ontario – worth a try.*

- ◆ Dawn dish washing liquid **kills fleas instantly**. Add a few drops to your dog's bath – shampoo the animal thoroughly. Rinse well to avoid skin irritations. Good-bye fleas!

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*Easy Living Hints*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

- ◆ **If a house has flea infestation**, pour enough Dawn dishwashing liquid to cover the bottom of a shallow pan and place it under a night light overnight. Fleas jump in, they don't jump out.
- ◆ Next time your dog comes in from the rain, **eliminate the dog odour** by simply wiping down the animal with any dryer sheet. Your dog will instantly smell springtime fresh.

### Cat Care Too

- ◆ **Cats like to scratch** - so add carpet around a dinette table leg and introduce kitty to its new scratching post.
- ◆ **Suspend a toy** on a string and your cat will think the RV is paradise.
- ◆ **Where to put the Litter box** is another challenge, some RVers manufacture a revolving door in the bed frame or in an unused space beneath the dresser drawers – this way it is out of site and out of the way.
  - ◆ *These tips too submitted by Lianne Durant, Ontario – also worth a try.*
- ◆ A few drops of **Wesson Corn Oil in your cat's ear gets rid of ear mites**. Massage it in; follow by cleaning with a cotton ball. Repeat daily for 3 days. The oil soothes the cat's skin, smothers the mites, and accelerates healing.
- ◆ **To prevent troublesome hair balls**, apply a dollop of Vaseline petroleum jelly to your cat's nose. The cat will lick off the jelly, lubricating any hair in its stomach so it can pass easily through the digestive system.

### General Cleaning

When our coach was listed for sale during the summer of 2004, we learned many **easy cleaning shortcuts** to keep it shimmering and ready for show. Weekly we concentrate on cleaning either the front or the back for a more thorough job.

- ◆ **Goo Gone removes sticky residue** left on hard surfaces from tape or putty.
- ◆ **Cooking oil or WD-40** also work (WD-40 may dissolve adhesives). Rub in – let it set a bit before wiping off. Repeat if necessary. Not for carpets or fabrics.
- ◆ There are several ways to **remove decals from solid surfaces or skin of an RV**.
  - Most will soften sufficiently for easy removal with a **hair dryer** (or a heat gun designed for this purpose). Be careful that it doesn't become too hot.
  - Follow with a coat of **denatured alcohol and a good polishing compound plus fibreglass wax**. (WD-40, along with a commercial adhesive remover may also work).
- ◆ **If these solutions aren't effective, ask a professional**. Trying other ways could damage the finish of your unit; your RV may even require refurbishing.
- ◆ We prefer to add decals and **'stick-on' items to windows** rather than to RV skin.
- ◆ On Kastle #2 we added a large piece of **Plexiglas over the back ladder** for stick on club decals.

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*Easy Living Hints*

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- ◆ **Attaching ‘stick-on’ Velcro keeps items in place** but it is extremely difficult to remove from many surfaces.
  - Our first motorhome was two-years old when we bought it and there was **black Velcro everywhere**. When we sold it eight-years later, the Velcro was still there.
  - On Kastle #3 we removed a picture from the manufacturer and the finish of the wallboard came off when we removed the Velcro. I **covered the damaged areas with a field of ‘press on craft-style’ butterflies**, for a touch of décor.
- ◆ If your RV has **high washable ceilings**, use a long-handled sponge with the help of a no-rinse heavy-duty cleaner. **Fabric ceilings** can be vacuumed or cleaned with the help of professional carpet cleaners. Resistant spots on ceiling fabric can usually be covered with **white shoe polish**.
- ◆ Club Soda will **remove red wine stains** from carpet or fabric. Saturate the area; let it sit a few minutes and ‘wipe’ dry with clean cloth.
- ◆ Many RV’s are equipped with long-lasting **Corian counter-tops** – usually with a 10-year warranty. Although over time scratches do mar the finish. Sooo if the use of a cutting board is not your normal habit, this surface will mark. Don’t despair; most scratches and minor marks are easily removed.
  - Cover the counter with a **thin layer of cooking oil**.
  - Gently sand the surface with **ultra-fine sand paper** – many marks vanish.
  - **Add more oil, rub in** and the counters glisten.
  - Now with the continuous use of a thin plastic cutting board – ALL cuts and marks are minimal.
- ◆ **To add lustre** to dull bathroom fixtures – clean normally, follow with a **light ‘spray’ of fibreglass wax** designed to polish RV’s. The shower, toilet and sink simply sparkle. *Thanks to Mary Moppin’s [www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm](http://www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm).*
- ◆ **A light ‘scrub’ using a wet SOS pad** will remove surface etchings that occur over time on brass fixtures. We also added new ‘plates’ to most wall switches.
- ◆ **Water droplets stain our brass bathroom sink drain**. BUT no big deal – a light scrub with a wet SOS pad adds a shine and it stays that way if we dry the sink following each use.
- ◆ After each weekly cleaning, we add a **final spray of coach wax to all brass** fixtures to keep it brilliant.
- ◆ Adding a **dose of lemon oil** adds a perpetual shine to all wood.

### ***Lemon Juice and Vinegar cleaning Tips***

*(More ideas listed in additional specific sections)*

- ◆ **Lemon Juice has many uses** –
  - Removes spots from clothing – let it set for 15 minutes before washing.
  - Apply to shoes of any colours and buff to a good shine.
  - Add a cup in the washer to remove rust and stains from clothes.

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*Easy Living Hints*

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- o A teaspoon mixed with gallon of water is great for windows.
  - o Adds a fresh scent to sinks, micro and cutting boards, etc.
  - o Additional uses go on and on.
  - ◆ **White vinegar also has numerous uses –**
    - o A 50-50 mix cleans kitchen appliances, counters and bathrooms too.
    - o Boil a weak mixture on the stove to freshen an RV.
    - o Add a bit to boiled eggs to help them peel easier.
    - o Hot vinegar will remove labels from glass or plastic.
    - o The list of uses also seems endless.
  - ◆ **Add vinegar to the rinse water of each wash load for softer clothes.** It removes all traces of soap. It may take several washes to remove the soap. The clothes will become soft and absorbent.
- NOTE: We also use it in the main wash – our clothes seem to be cleaner*
- ◆ **To add a fresh scent to RV sink drains** - pour 1-cup of baking soda down the drain; follow with a cup of white vinegar. After it foams and spits, the drains will be sweet smelling for several weeks.
  - ◆ **Vinegar and water solution** can replace Windex to clean all mirrors and glass.
  - ◆ **When washing windows** use vertical strokes on the outside and horizontal strokes on the inside. It is easier to see where the streaks are. Straight vinegar works well to clean the outside. If you wash windows on a sunny day, they dry too fast.
  - ◆ **To keep wild flowers fresh longer** place them in a vase of ¼ cup vinegar/8 cups of water. If this doesn't revive them try cutting them under water/vinegar solution.

*Editor's note: Plants or cut flowers can't be transferred across the border.*

## Easy Cleaning Tips

1. **To clean a burned pan**, add cream of tartar to water, boil for several minutes and wash clean.
  - o **OR** add a bit of **dish soap to water** that covers the bottom of the pan and bring to a boil on the stovetop.
2. In an emergency, **sand or pinecones** also make good pot scrubbers
3. **Pointed foam paintbrushes** work wonders to clean the slotted crevices of fans or a computer keyboard.
4. **For easy hand-washing**, try placing a bucket of soapy water in your shower and add your undies before you depart. Agitation during driving washes the clothes; they're ready to rinse and dry when you reach your destination.
5. **Dawn dish soap** (or any other mild dish soap) doubles as a substitute for a gentle shampoo. It also breaks up oil and dirt on John's ball caps and shirt collars so they wash cleaner.
6. Shampoo (or dish soap) poured on a sponge and spread over the pebbly **floor of the shower effortlessly releases dirt**. A quick rinse and the floor is clean.
7. To clean our **wooden slat blinds**, we spray an old sock with quality wood oil (WD-40 also added a shine but I would only use that product occasionally).

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*Easy Living Hints*

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8. **Pre-packaged cleaning cloths** treated with a wide variety of formulas from
9. cleaners to glass cleaners to wet and dry dusters travel easily without spilling.
10. Anti-static dusting cloths effortlessly **clean screens** – ‘wet-versions’ of these cloths work even better on very **dirty screens**.
11. These pre-dampened cloths easily **‘dust’ day/night blinds OR slat style**.
12. The long hose of our Central Vac was a nuisance and overkill with our small amount of carpet. We found a **‘plug-in’ compact Dirt Devil Scorpion** is a much more efficient appliance for our use.

*Les Doll, Webhost of [www.rverwcorner.com](http://www.rverwcorner.com) recently shared this tip in his periodic informative newsletter!*

### **Screen under floor vents** (from Trailer Life).

Murphy's Law says that if you drop a small object, it **WILL** go into the floor vent for the central heating system. We added Fiberglass window screen fabric behind each of the floor vents. It catches any dropped items plus dirt and leaves that get tracked in – now it is easily vacuumed up.

We removed the vents, lay the screen fabric down, press the vents back in and trim the excess screening.

### **Outside Cleaning Tips**

- ◆ **Cleaning the high front of a basement-style motorhome or a fifth wheel** can also be a real challenge. A long-handle sponge, with the metal part removed, simplifies this task. Apply cleaner with the mop portion and cover with a towel to polish the area to a high shine.
- ◆ **Baking soda and water** solution...
  - **Removes tar** from vehicles.
  - It's a superior general **household cleaner**.
  - Dipping **jewellery** into a mixture of baking soda/water makes it sparkle.
  - John also uses a toothbrush and a thick paste of baking soda mixed with water to **clean his battery terminals**. He rinses it off with clear water.
- ◆ To remove the white, chalky appearance from RV skin – before re-painting – try an easy-to-use cleaner designed to **remove oxidization from fibreglass boats**.
  - For years we applied **Meguiar's Heavy Duty Oxidation Removers** with a soft cloth, let it dry to a haze and wiped it off to reveal a lustrous shine. A coat of one-step **RV/boat cleaner and wax** sealed the finish. The dullness disappeared and both glistened like new.
  - However nothing John did would bring the finish of our ‘LUXOR’ up to his wishes. Three-years ago a **detailing expert**, spent two and a half days using high-powered polishers along with Meguiar’s commercial products.
  - Even now our 10-year old prize possession – front to back – looks as if it just came off the line. John keeps it that way with **regular polishing using a low power buffer and quality wax products**.

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- ◆ Most RVers will find one of the new **ultra UV-protection cleaner/wax** products is all that is needed to keep a 'like new' finish. Look for one that applies with minimum effort and wipes off to a shine.
- ◆ **Spray-on tire shining products** add a 'like-new' finish to our tires. These products also offer UV-protection – but only use brands **without petroleum** in the ingredients; petroleum is very damaging to rubber.
- ◆ **Controlling black streaks** is always a hassle; Many products are sold for this purpose but another favourite is **Lysol Tub and Tile Cleaner (foam)**. It not only effortlessly removes persistent black marks, but also leaves a smooth finish, especially on a fibreglass skin.
- ◆ To **display decals and stickers** from RV Clubs – attach a piece of Plexiglas (cut-to-fit) to your ladder – mount decals. A preferred option that is easier on the RV skin.
  - We bought our Plexiglas from a **glass repair** place
  - **Punch holes into the edge** of your display board; attach to the ladder with heavy-duty plastic ties and you're all set to go.
  - When you **sell your unit, simply remove** your 'on-the-road' mementoes and attach them to the next unit.
- ◆ **Dripping water from an air conditioner** makes a real mess on the side of an RV. One friend drilled a small hole in the pan below his air conditioner and ran a piece of clear plastic tubing, sealed with silicone, to the ground. A container collects residue from the tubing and his coach stays clean.

### Miscellaneous RV Care Ideas

- ◆ Poor **caulking around the running lights** on the top of the unit can result in water leaking through the front and back windows. Been there, done that too!
  - To correct – **remove** the lens cover plus the old caulking of the running lights. **Clean** the area, **re-seal** with a bead of silicone. **Replace** the lens.
- ◆ Another neighbour, Fuzzy and Christy, relayed that the 'security light' on their fifth wheel quit working when water seeped inside the fixture. He **creatively modified a 'circle gasket' out of a sheet of 'foamy'** (sold in craft stores). Voila – no more leaks!
- ◆ **When removing a battery for winter storage**, place a small piece of coloured tape to each wire and terminal combination before disconnecting.
  - Use **different colour** tape for each combination – to re-install, match up the coloured tape pieces.
  - During a recent replacement of our 6-volt house batteries, I was impressed **the techs made a diagram of our set-up** before removing our old ones.
- ◆ **'Winterize' your screen door** the easy way. Cut a piece of Plexiglas to cover the screen and attach with brackets that allow easy removal. With the new 'storm' window you can enjoy the sunny day without being cold.
- ◆ **Bike kickstands** frequently sink into the soft ground. If you attach a golf ball to the end of the stand, your bike stays upright.

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*Easy Living Hints*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

- ◆ **The corners on RV Slideouts** are easy to collide with – causing serious injury. Our RV neighbour added a 12” piece of a rubber swim noodle to each slide corner for protection.
- ◆ **When using our generator** in a campsite, we routinely keep the generator door ajar for easy access in an emergency.

*NOTE: During our early days while at a large rally, **our generator faltered**, emitting a loud bang followed by a puff of smoke. We had left it running to power the air conditioner for our dogs while we were away attending seminars. Anxious neighbours couldn't shut the genie off because that compartment was locked. Fortunately, no major problem resulted – both the dogs and the genie survived.*

## Much About Wd-40

I received these tips plus many more by email. But there are several drawbacks to **this amazing product**. As a result I am only sharing a few because WD-40 will dissolve glue of all types – some areas you may not want to soften. For instance, it will dissolve the glue that secures each piece of our tile plank flooring. **WD-40 also DAMAGES RUBBER** – it will expand before breaking down. Sooo NEVER use this product on a rubber electric cord to keep ants away – or on sewer valve handles Silicone spray works better for that task.

The standard joke in the RV Industry says it all – ***RVers only need two products – if it sticks and it shouldn't use WD-40; but if it doesn't stick and it should USE DUCT TAPE.***

- ◆ The following sound like great ideas but I have not TESTED them.
  - It gives **vinyl floors** a 'just-waxed' sheen without making it slippery.
  - **Protects silver** from tarnishing.
  - Works **similar to Goo-Gone** to remove sticky residue from tape, etc.
  - Removes **lipstick stains**
  - **Untangles jewellery** chains
  - Removes **stains from stainless steel sink**

## General Shopping/Living Tips

*Lianne Durant, Trenton Ontario submitted these tips  
Only some have been tested*

1. The tags on **bread sold in grocery** stores indicate the date it was delivered. Monday – Blue, Tuesday – Green, Thursday – Red, Friday – white, Saturday – Yellow. The colours are alphabetical in colour, but you can also add a tiny post-it note to your wallet to remind you which is which.
2. **If sealed envelopes are put in the freezer** for a few hours, you can slide a knife under the flap to open – the envelope can even be resealed.

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*Easy Living Hints*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

3. To **thaw ice on steps and to stop them from refreezing** in cold weather – pour hot water mixed with Dawn dish soap on the surface. They will not refreeze.
4. To **remove crayon marks from walls**, wipe with a damp rag, dipped in baking soda – minimal elbow grease required.
5. **Remove permanent marker** on appliances and counter tops (such as the BLUE from a receipt) with rubbing alcohol on paper towel.
6. Most of us do not use a full cleaning pad. So **cutting new S.O.S. Pads in half with scissors** helps to extend uses. There is no longer a need to throw out a half used rusty or smelling pads.
7. To **remove blood stains from clothes** pour a little peroxide on a cloth and the residue wipes off.
8. **To clean artificial flowers** pour some salt in a paper bag and add the flowers. Shake vigorously as the salt will absorb all the dust and dirt. Your artificial flowers look like new.
9. **Spray plastic storage dishes with non-stick spray** before pouring tomato based sauces in them. This eliminates stains.
10. When a cake recipe calls for flouring the backing pan, **use a bit of a dry cake mix instead**. This avoids the white mess on the outside of the cake.
11. **Wrap celery with aluminium foil** before storing it in the refrigerator; it will keep fresh for weeks.
12. When **boiling corn on the cob add a pinch of sugar** to the pot to bring out the corns natural sweetness.
13. To **cure a headache**, rub a half of lime on your forehead – the throbbing wanes.
14. **Freeze leftover wine as ice-cubes** and use them in casseroles and sauces.
15. To eliminate **the itch of mosquito bites**, apply soap to area for instant relief.
16. **Candles last longer** if they are placed in the freezer for a minimum of 3-hours before burning.
17. **Spray a bit of perfume on a light bulb to create** pleasant scent in any room.
18. Place **fabric softener sheets in dresser drawers or the linen cupboard**; your clothes will smell fresh washed for weeks.
19. **Use spray-on air-freshener to clean mirrors**. It works great plus it leaves a lovely scent to the shine.
20. **To remove a splinter, reach for the scotch tape before** resorting to tweezers or a needle. Place scotch tape over splinter, then pull it off – most splinters painlessly disappear.
  - o **OR** pour a drop of Elmer's Glue all over the splinter, let dry, and peel the dried glue off the skin. The splinter sticks to the dried glue.

## Handy Tips For Alka Seltzer

*More on this product in individual sections*

- ◆ **Cure urinary tract infections with Alka-Seltzer.** Just dissolve two tablets in a glass of water and drink it at the onset of the symptoms. Alka-Seltzer begins eliminating urinary tract infections almost instantly – even though the product was never been advertised for this use.

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*Easy Living Hints*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

- ◆ **To clean the water marks from a glass vase** fill the vase with water and add two Alka Seltzer tablets.
- ◆ **To polish jewellery** – drop two Alka Seltzer tablets in a glass of water and add jewellery, let it sit for two minutes.
- ◆ **To clean a thermos bottle** – drop in four Alka Seltzer tablets, and let it soak for an hour (or longer if necessary).
- ◆ **Unclog a drain.** Clear the sink drain by dropping three Alka Seltzer tablets down the drain followed by a cup of vinegar. Wait a few minutes and rinse with hot water.

*Editor's Note: Baking soda plus vinegar also effectively clean a drain*

## Practical First Aid Suggestions

*Suggestions submitted by Dawn Polk [www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com)*

*[www.rvuniversity.com](http://www.rvuniversity.com) Untested use at your own risk*

- ◆ Drinking two glasses of Gatorade **can relieve headache pain** almost immediately -- without the unpleasant side effects caused by traditional "pain relievers."
- ◆ Deep breathing **oxygenates the blood** to relieve hangovers, muscle tension and some heartburn.
- ◆ Colgate Toothpaste makes an excellent **salve for burns?**
- ◆ Before you head to the drugstore for a high-priced inhaler filled with mysterious chemicals, **try chewing on a couple of strong Altoid Peppermints to clear up a stuffed nose.**
- ◆ **Relieve aching muscles from a bout of the flu** – mix 1 Tablespoon of Horseradish in a cup of Olive Oil. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then apply it as a massage oil, for instant relief for aching muscles.
- ◆ **Sore Throat?** Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey; take 1 tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.
- ◆ **Eliminate puffiness under your eyes...** add a dab of Preparation H; carefully rub into the skin, avoiding the eyes. The hemorrhoid ointment acts as a vasoconstrictor, that relieves the swelling.
- ◆ **Honey remedy for skin blemishes...** Cover the blemish with a dab of honey and place a band-aid over it. Honey kills the bacteria, keeps the skin sterile, and speeds healing. Works overnight.
- ◆ **Did hot pepper burn your mouth?** If you are not diabetic, just chew a little bit of sugar granules to relieve the pain.
- ◆ **Listerine therapy for toenail fungus...** Get rid of unsightly toenail fungus by soaking your toes in Listerine mouthwash. The powerful antiseptic leaves your toenails looking healthy again.
- ◆ **Easy eyeglass protection...** To prevent the screws on eyeglasses from loosening – apply a small drop of Crystal Clear Nail Polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.

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*Easy Living Hints*

To find a Specific Tip, Click 'CTL+f' - Enter a 'Keyword or Phrase' in box - Click 'NEXT'

- ◆ **Coca-Cola cure removes rust...** Just saturate an abrasive sponge with Coca Cola and scrub the rust stain. The phosphoric acid in the coke eliminates rust.
- ◆ **Hunt's Tomato Paste relief for boils...** cover the boil with Hunt's tomato paste as a compress. The acids from the tomatoes will soothe the pain and brings the boil to a head.
- ◆ **Balm for broken blisters...** To disinfect a broken blister, dab on a few drops of Listerine... a powerful antiseptic.
- ◆ **Heinz Vinegar to heal bruises...** Soak a cotton ball in white vinegar and apply it to the bruise for 1 hour. The vinegar reduces the blueness and speeds up the healing process.
- ◆ **Quaker Oats for fast pain relief.** It's not just for breakfast anymore! Mix 2 cups of Quaker Oats and 1 cup of water in a bowl and warm in the microwave for 1 minute, cool slightly, and apply the mixture to your hands for soothing relief from arthritis pain.
- ◆ *Repeat Tip:* To **relieve pain from mosquito bites** rub **area** with soap.
- ◆ *Repeat Tip:* Recently while in the pool I was stung with a bee on my back. Our medical journal suggested we cover with a thick **paste of baking soda and water or mud**. If you scrape the paste off with a credit card – the stinger usually comes with paste.

## A Few of the 'Good Guys'

It is frustrating to call a company with a simple question only to hear, “Your item is no longer under warrantee – call our other help line and for a fee, a tech will assist you”. Thankfully these three companies believe in superior RV customer service AND you will never receive a greeting such as that above.

**Battery powered FANTASTIC VENTS** [www.fantasticvent.com](http://www.fantasticvent.com) from Imlay City, Michigan (cycle on and off as needed – models vary but may include temperature control, rain sensor and exhaust functions. If it malfunctions, simply call their toll-free line. They will send you parts, walk you through the repair, and even pay ¼ hour labour, etc. Warrantee coverage is never questioned – if you have their vents they provide assistance.

**At the HWH PLANT** [www.hwhcorp.com](http://www.hwhcorp.com) in Moscow, Iowa (this company manufacturer hydraulic jacks and slide mechanisms), the techs diagnose and repair their products on site at the plant. Out of warrantee customers pay a reasonable hourly rate plus the costs of parts.. Their hospitality includes treating customers to lunch at the local restaurant plus hook-ups for overnight guests.

**SPLENDIDE WASHER/DRYER COMPANY** [www.splendide.com](http://www.splendide.com) from Clackamas, OR and Elkhart, IN is another plus. When our W/D wouldn't drain I called 'Splendide' stating we were out of warrantee, but I wanted to know where to go for a solution? Two techs, over five phone calls, walked us through our self-repair. Warranty coverage seemed unimportant, they simply believe in their great product and want satisfied customers.

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**BLUE OX** [www.blueox.us](http://www.blueox.us) is from Pender, NE another great company to deal with. This past summer we were honoured to test their new **Alexus tow bar, with a 10000 lb towing capacity – superior addition to their line-up.** When we had problems disconnecting the brackets from the car while on a decline, a pleasant helpful call to tech support solved the problem

- **Set the Emergency brake**
- **Turn wheels to Left**
- **Then turn to right**
- **And then straight ahead**
- **Problem solved**

## Campground Set-up

### Levelling

- ◆ When boards are required to level your RV **ALWAYS place the same number of boards under BOTH the inside and outside tire.** OR under EACH tire of multi axle vehicles.
  - **Elevating only ONE tire** alone stresses that axle.
- ◆ **Automatic levelling jacks** add to the ease of campsite set up.

*NOTE: However, be sure the ones you purchase are heavy enough for your unit. Our first coach came with an electronic levelling system that would stabilize, but not lift our motorhome.*
- ◆ **ALWAYS place a pad or board** between the jacks and the ground;
- ◆ Make it a habit to put **chocks behind the wheels** to avoid rolling off jacks. This doesn't apply to units with 'air-brakes'.

### Water

- ◆ **Never use a green garden hose** to connect your RV to park water.

*NOTE: This is a dangerous practice because these hoses are not insulated – the heat generated from the sun creates a perfect atmosphere to grow bacteria.*
- ◆ RVers beware – always use the **specially designed drinking water hoses** to bring water into your RV. It's not only tastier; it's a lot healthier.
- ◆ Most RVers carry an extra **25' extension of drinking water hose.**
- ◆ Simplify the connection of your water hose – **add a quick disconnect** designed for home garden hoses.

*NOTE: Keep one end permanently on your coach with the opposing end on your water hose and **connection is a snap.** These handy adapters are also a convenient way to join two hoses together.*
- ◆ In some parks, water pressure surges to an excess of 100 psi. Place the **water regulator, at the TAP END of the hose** (park connection) to reduce the water pressure to 45 psi, the recommended level for RV plumbing.

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- One friend **attaches his regulator to the hose with a chain** or with gun-tape so he won't leave it behind.
- Periodically **soak these regulators in CLR** – especially if the tap water pressure in your unit decreases. 'Been there, done that'.
- Not all fresh water tank fill-ports have an air release vent-hole – however if water splashes in your face while filling, RV stores sell adapters to **fill fresh water tanks**. This connection allows air to escape as water fills the tank.
 

*NOTE: We made an inexpensive tank-filler by **attaching a piece of rubber surgical hose** (from the pharmacy) to the male end of a quick disconnect adapter. Connect the adapter to your water hose and place it in the tank.*
- ◆ A good source of fresh water is most important - keeping your **fresh water tank pure is also easy**, IF purged after storage and at periodic intervals.
  - **To purge**, add 4-6 ounces of chlorine to 3/4 tank of water and let the water run through your taps until you can smell chlorine.
  - **Turn taps off**, let the mixture sit in the tank for several hours OR take a short drive (to cause agitation).
  - **Drain and refill tank and drain again** by letting water run through taps until all chlorine odours disappear.
  - **Refill tank with fresh water** and use as required.
  - Regular treatment is **half a teaspoon to each 10 gallons** of water.
 

*NOTE: Every gallon of liquid adds weight ( i.e. propane 4.2, water 8.3, etc.). Choose carefully how many extra pounds are actually necessary.*
- ◆ **Commercial liquid water purifiers** available from RV stores are easier to use than household bleach.
- ◆ **'In-line' water filters** can be a blessing during your travels.
 

*NOTE: Although park water may test healthy, many campground systems have an objectionable taste or smell. Either a **one-unit style** or the **canister-type** with removable filters helps improve taste and odour.*
- ◆ Be sure to **turn the water pump off**. Rough roads can jiggle a tap open and when the grey tank overflows, it will fill the shower. Stale grey water has a foul odour and anything stored in the shower will be saturated with this stinky foul liquid.
- ◆ There is always **bottled water** for drinking and cooking.
 

*NOTE: In the northern U.S.A. and Canada **refill kiosks** are likely to be inside due to the weather. Look for them in grocery stores and drug stores.*

*Debbie and Rodney, North Bay, Ontario submitted this tip.*
- ◆ As new RVers, on a 3-week maiden voyage in a Provincial campground with our 27-foot Terry Dakota, we were running low on fresh water so **Rodney devised a refill 'funnel' for the fresh water tank using two water bottles**. Yes, collapsible plastic funnels are available – we didn't have one handy.

Rodney cut a round hole in one water bottle about two inches from the bottom (along the side) then stuck the bottle neck top of the refill bottle into that hole so the contraption looks like an "L" shape. He then secured the neck of the main bottle to the trailer with duct tape – it worked great in a pinch.

*Editor's Note: This just proves if we use our heads, we too can find a way to cope in unusual situations.*

*Karen Kacso submitted this great tip.*

- ◆ We drink a lot of **bottled water when travelling**, and, of course, all bottles look the same and usually get mixed up and unfinished. The inexpensive small rings used to **identify wine glasses** (available at Dollar stores), fit on these water bottles. The children enjoy keeping track of their water and the bottles finally get finished.
- ◆ **Outside showers** are standard on many RV's. If your unit isn't so equipped, make your own outside tap by placing a **'Y' connection** at the city outlet receptacle on your coach OR at the park tap. Add a **short piece of hose** to the 'Y' and presto, you have an outside tap.

*Louie Roberts passed on this tip, compliments of a fellow camper*

- ◆ He uses it regularly. To **dispel 'dead air' in his fresh water hose**, after connecting to the "RV fresh/city water inlet", he 'valves' the water to enter his fresh water tank long enough to evacuate the air - he then 'valves' it back to supply his RV intake. This eliminates a water blast in your face or on your feet or when you turn on your tap.

*Editor's Note: If this is not a convenient 'fill' in your RV – make a point to always flush the toilet before turning on a tap after you connect to water.*

## Electric

- ◆ It is not wise to connect power using an orange or yellow **14-gauge, 15-amp extension cord**. The wiring is not heavy enough to carry a heavy electrical load of A/C plus extras.
- ◆ Most RVers carry an extra **25-foot heavy duty, 10-gauge, 30-amp electric cord**.
- ◆ PLUS a variety of electrical **'dog-bone' style adapters and plug-in adapters** that connect 15-amps to 30-amps and vice-versa. The 'dog-bone' style does not absorb as much heat as the round or triangle adapters.

*NOTE: In many NEW parks we find service ranges between 15 – 50-amp. It's a good idea to also include a 50-amp to 30-amp plus a 30-amp to 50-amp adapter as part of your collection.*

- ◆ Not all campgrounds are properly wired. Some electric boxes have **reversed polarity**, others have an **open ground** and both are dangerous situations if you connect your RV to this source of power. Fires can and do result from improper wiring.
- ◆ Before connecting your unit to shore power, ALWAYS test the wiring with a small **plug-in tester/monitor**. If the monitor reads okay, remove it, turn the breaker off, and plug in your unit, turn the breaker on.

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- ◆ With all the storms occurring these days **it is wise to add a surge protector** to your unit. Some models temporarily attach **to the park outlet OR an inline power line monitor (PLM)** can permanently be installed in an RV's electrical system.

*NOTE: These two prevent damage to appliances caused by **electrical surges** exceeding 130 volts or **brownout** conditions (not enough power) below 102 volts. **PLM's simply turn all power OFF** in micro-seconds (to avoid damage) for up to four minutes. This provides time for the problem to rectify itself. A PLM or surge protector protects the delicate workings of appliances such as you're A/C.*

**Warning - NEVER tie your pet to the metal portion of your RV! If there is a power surge or an open ground the dog will complete the circuit.**

### **Sewer**

- ◆ **Many RV Resorts insist RVers use a rubber donut** between hose and the outlet, EVEN if you routinely use the newly designed nylon adapters. The donut keeps your hose out of the sewer system and the gases underground.
- ◆ **Adapters are not always located within a convenient distance.** Most seasoned RVers carry a 10 and 20-foot extension for these out of the way sewer hook-ups.
- ◆ **A wide choice of tank chemicals are also available,** but solutions with Formaldehyde will destroy the good bacteria in sewer systems. Bacteria/enzyme solutions effectively break-up the contents of your tanks, AND in the park disposal tanks.
- ◆ **Always keep black tank closed till it reaches ½ full.**
- ◆ **But the grey tank can be left open,** IF connected to sewer. Close it the night before departure, have your showers and in the morning, dump black first and follow with the gray.

### **Awning Care**

- ◆ **When you raise your awning** always drop one end by several inches.
- ◆ **Rainwater is extremely heavy** and if it doesn't drain, the weight will tear your awning and/or bend the hardware.
- ◆ If you forget and the water puddles in the middle, simply take a broom and **push the water out** before attempting to lower the awning.
- ◆ **Cleaning your awning** is not difficult –
  - Apply a gentle soap/water solution to **top and bottom** of fabric.
  - **Roll the awning up** and wait for five minutes.
  - Extend it again, **rinse with a hose.**
  - If it doesn't come clean, **repeat.**

*NOTE: RV stores sell a variety of solution designed to clean awnings. **Strong cleaners may damage** the water retardant ability of the fabric.*

- ◆ We always **roll our awning at bedtime** OR when we are away for the day.
 

*NOTE: Winds come up very fast when you least expect it. We also hate 3A.M. awning calls – when it starts to rattle and you lay there hoping the noise will go away, it seems the longer you wait the worse it gets.*

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## Avoid Dented And Mangled TV Antennas

Simple reminders that eliminate the embarrassing and very expensive mistake of leaving your TV antenna up are listed below.

1. Add a large spring-loaded hair clip on your **TV antenna handle**. When the antenna is up, move the clip to your motorhome **steering wheel** or to a 'can't miss' **final checkpoint** near the doorway of your trailer. When its time to leave, if the clip is anywhere BUT the handle – check antenna.
2. A park visitor from Crystal River **made up reminder clips** for everything from the lights, step, cable, sewer, water, power, propane, etc.
3. In a motorhome, place a **dummy key in the ignition** when the antenna is extended and **hang the dummy key ring** on the antenna handle when it's in travelling position.
4. When your antenna is up, **hang the RV keys** on the antenna handle.
5. Some **trailerists tie a scarf** to a final checkpoint position.
6. Hang a long '**can't miss decoration**' to the handle when the antenna is up.
7. Another suggestion from a Florida park resident. He cut a piece of **colourful 'swim' noodles about 8"-10" long and inserted a cord** with magnets at each end. He hangs it on his fifth-wheel front support by connecting the magnets. This way he cannot connect without lowering the antenna.

**BOTTOM LINE IS YOU NEED SOME KIND OF A REMINDER**

## Combat Dampness and Condensation

Open containers of a crystal-type dehumidifier/desiccant placed in choice locations help to **remove excess humidity in an RV**.

- ◆ **DAMP RID** is sold in U.S. grocery stores or RV dealers; (**NO-DAMP** is a similar product sold at RV dealers in Canada). **DRI-Z-AIR** is another option – and this product includes a fancy container sold at RV dealers.

*NOTE: Using this type of desiccant is extremely **important in an RV during storage**. Place 1-3 containers throughout the unit. As Fulltimers, we always leave a container sitting at the back of the stove to control moisture.*

- ◆ **Kitty litter** offers a similar effect but not as convenient or efficient.
- ◆ **Desiccants also come in small pouches** to control humidity in closets. (*Similar but larger to the small packets you find in new shoes.*)
  - We frequently add one to our **tow car** to remove the odour from wet rugs that are stowed while moving from place to place.
  - These pouches also **eliminate a mouldy odour** resulting from a water leak in a hard-to-reach area – such as at the back of a cupboard.

## Controlling Pests And Creepy Crawlies

Trying to keep pesky bug populations in control, especially **ANTS**, is always a problem. Either buy commercial traps or try some of these home remedies. Worth a try!

### Ants

- ◆ Put an **Ex-Lax square in a lid** with a few drops of water near the entrance points.
- ◆ Be sure all hoses and cords are **off the ground** at your campsite.

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- ◆ **Wrap cloths saturated with bug spray** around hoses/cords at RV end.
- ◆ **Coat all outside hoses and electrical cords** with a silicone-based lubricant – bugs hate the oily feeling. Do not use WD-40 on anything made of rubber.
- ◆ **Sprinkle ant powder or household cleanser** around tires, jacks, hoses and cords.
- ◆ Another solution to control ants; place **1-teaspoon Borax acid powder with 1/4-cup sugar (any kind) and 2-cups hot water**. Place in foil ‘cups’ that sit on the counter.

### Mice

- ◆ They seem to hate the smell of **Downy fabric softener sheets**, so place these near every entrance point.
- ◆ According to a worker in Pest Control, place carbonated beverages in a lid overnight. **The sugar attracts Mice and the ‘FIZZ’ kills them.**
- ◆ Place **unlit Citronella in obscure places**. The scent keeps them away.
- ◆ **Stuff ‘brass wool’** (similar to steel wool) in holes where wires and hoses enter.  
*NOTE: More ideas appear in an article covering insurance claims by Mark Polk – RVEducation101.com [www.rvuniversity.com/article.php/20051018113846796](http://www.rvuniversity.com/article.php/20051018113846796) claim#5*

### Roaches

- ◆ **Scatter bay leaves** throughout cupboards and around openings to deter roaches from making your RV their home.

### Miscellaneous

- ◆ As an added precaution, **I always remove food items (even cereal) from cardboard cartons**. The cartons could be home to a colony of roach eggs.
- ◆ **Spray flies or bees with hairspray**; they will take a quick dive.
- ◆ **Formula 409 cleaning liquid doubles as a bug killer**. If menacing bees, wasps, hornets, or yellow jackets are in your home, try spraying with Formula 409. Insects instantly drop to the ground and die.
- ◆ **I always keep a package of ‘fogger-canisters’** on hand in case we encounter an abundance of ‘bugs during our travels. These 3-packs are sold in US grocery stores although they are not available for use in Canada. To set one off – cover your dishes/foodstuffs with a towel; open all cupboard doors and set off one or more canisters. Leave the RV for 4-hours, on return all creepy crawlies, ants, fleas, flying insects will become a pest of the past.
- ◆ *Repeat Tip:* Recently while in the pool I was stung with a bee on my back. Our medical journal suggested we cover with a thick **paste of baking soda and water or from mud**. Then scrape area– stinger sticks to the paste. All pain went away.

### Mosquito Remedies - also worth a try

- ◆ Put water in a **WHITE dinner plate** and add a couple of drops of ‘Lemon Fresh Joy Dish Detergent’.
- ◆ Set dish on the porch, patio, or other outdoor area.
- ◆ No one really knows why but mosquitoes flock to it. They drop dead shortly after drinking the Lemon Fresh Joy/water mixture, and usually within 10 feet of the plate.

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**I received these by email BUT I'VE not tested them – Try at your own risk!**

- ◆ Take a **Vitamin B-1** (Thiamine Hydrochloride 100 mg) tablet per day April through Oct
- ◆ **If you eat bananas, mosquitoes love you**, Might be wise to leave the bananas alone for the summer.
- ◆ According to some who spend time in the woods - **Vick's Vapo-rub** is also a great insect repellent.
- ◆ Of course **Avon Skin-so-Soft lotion** comes high on any list to control mosquitoes BUT when the bath oil is mixed with alcohol (50/50) it's even more effective.
- ◆ A great natural repellent to keep mosquitoes and ticks at bay is to apply **clear Pure Vanilla, the type that is sold in Mexico**.
- ◆ *Repeat Tip:* To **relieve pain from mosquito bites**, rub **area** with soap.

### **Additional Uses Of Dryer Sheets**

*Submitted by Marie Degaust, Ontario*

- ◆ I place the **soft sheets, designed to use in a clothes drier**, over hangers in the closet to add a pleasant odour to the closet.
- ◆ They can also be attached to the back of a ball cap so they hang down over the neck and ears **to prevent bites from black flies and mosquitoes**.

*Norm and Linda Payne, webhosts of [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com) added this tip.*

- ◆ A **dampened dryer sheet** easily **removes bugs from the front of a vehicle**.

### **Travelling Without Iron Or Ironing Board?**

*Submitted by Hesta at Crystal River*

Downy Wrinkle Releaser Spray instantly removes wrinkles from clothes **without ironing**. It is just like having an iron in a spray bottle. If you can't find it in the stores go here. [www.downy.com](http://www.downy.com).

## **RV Upgrades**

The winter of 2004, John and I attempted to make each feature of our luxurious LUXOR 'perfect'. Before our friends traded their motorhome, they added a coating of **MinWax Verithane** to all the dark-wood cupboards. They were so impressed how easily the MinWax removed the nicks, scratches and scuffing. As a result we visited the local Home Hardware/Home Depot for advice on how to restore the finish on our solid oak cabinets – especially how-to remove the general rub marks on our kitchen drawers.

- ◆ The store rep recommended we use water-based **Min-Wax Polycrylic, high gloss varnish**. Following a light sanding of 'worn areas', we wiped the entire surface with a wood cleaner.

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- ◆ Next we applied a very **thin coat with disposable foam brushes**. By working in a small area at a time, the task was not overwhelming. Our wood cabinets and trim now shimmers, plus it looks so rich. This is a very easy upgrade remedy. Our unit looks like it just came off the assembly line.

## Bedroom Headboard

RV's are made to last many years, but their image becomes tired in some areas. Our headboard fell into that category. To clean it, Mary Findley of Go Clean.com [www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm](http://www.rvliving.net/cleaningcont.htm) suggested we **remove all dirt and marks with Lysol Tub and Tile Foam Cleaner; follow that with a final 'wipe-off rinse' using white vinegar and water**. It cleaned up OK but we wanted a fresh face, so recovering the headboard was our next option.

Wal\*Mart sells a wide selection of household accessories under the brand name of 'MainStay' – numerous patterns and colours are available. We originally bought a wine colour 'queen' size bedspread for our queen bed but it was soooo large that we next purchased a 'full' size designed for a double bed – it fit our queen bed much better. I wanted the quilt to allow our bed skirt to show. The extra fabric of the 'queen spread' was more than enough **to recover our headboard plus highlight the valences**. (A 'twin' size would also work).

We removed the headboard to work on it outside. **By unscrewing the main portion, we stretched fabric over the original and stapled it in place on the back**. Using the same holes we reattached it to the frame. It was then ready to snugly fit inside the headboard slot.

We continued the décor by applying **a strip of wine fabric to the valences with coloured straight pins**. The bedroom motif now matches the burgundy highlights throughout this coach. To keep oil and dirt from accumulating on the new headboard, **we added a barrier of three extra sleep pillows 'dressed' in coordinated cases**. The final addition of tiny scattered silk flowers added a final touch.

## Amenities I Can't Live Without

New "extras" continually enter the market to simplify life on the move. One amenity I wouldn't want to live without is **my washer/dryer**. This combo unit is very useful yet takes little space.

Another 'must-have' is one or more **Fantastic Vents, complete with rain sensors**. These three-speed fans operate as intake or exhaust, plus they only use three-amps of power – great anytime but especially while dry camping. Set the temp and type of ventilation – the fan cycles on and off as needed. If the weather turns wet the vent closes and reopens when it is dry again.

**A power inverter is my all-time favourite accessory**. It powers most 110/120-volt, including the micro, but not the air conditioning. An inverter converts DC (battery) to AC (electric) – the larger the inverter capacity, the more appliances that can be operated simultaneously. You may need to add extra batteries to meet your needs

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It is such a pleasure to have access to many electric accessories when we stop for short jaunts – if we don't require the air conditioner, it is not necessary to find a 'plug-in'. Some RVers add one more step to this equation by keeping their batteries charged using **solar panels** – but that is another complex form of technology.

*NOTE: For info Norm Payne wrote a comprehensive how-to story at [www.seeya-downtheroad.com/InformationPage/Solar.html](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com/InformationPage/Solar.html) (More at [Solar panels/battery FAQ – Wind & Sun Batteries](#); [www.windsun.com/Batteries/Battery\\_FAQ.htm](http://www.windsun.com/Batteries/Battery_FAQ.htm) plus additional links at [www.rvliving.net/nalinkscont.htm](http://www.rvliving.net/nalinkscont.htm) (under Batteries).*

## Decorating or The Holidays

Adding Christmas lights to your RV in the sunny south makes for an upbeat happy holiday. Since not all sites have trees, it can be a challenge deciding where to hang lights to the outside of our units. But do not despair, it is so easy to decorate inside and out. I recently won campground awards of a second and third prize for the creative décor of my motorhome.

- ◆ Decorations such as '**stockings, wreath, bows, etc.**' adorn the sides of our coach with the help of **large (1.5"-2") suction cups**. (They don't hold in the cold).
- ◆ Using these suction cups, I string icicle lights completely around **the lower portion of our RV plus I layer many swag styles on the front**. HINT: New suction cups each year hold better.
- ◆ If the wind is minimal **I also decorate the awning**.
- ◆ If not I find other places to **string lights – the awning roll, site trees, etc.**
- ◆ Inside our unit I use the '**S**' shaped **drapery hooks** to hang decorations from cloth window valences or from cupboard handles.
- ◆ **Small suction cups hold objects on the glass windows/mirrors**. These simple adapters are worth their weight in gold. I really LOVE Christmas traditions/décor.
- ◆ Add **Santa hats to side mirrors (motorized units) or other protrusions** and you too can live in a twinkling fantasy world while basking in the sunshine.

## RV Living Extras

### When Dinners Ready – Its Time To Stop

*Submitted by Sandra from Henderson, Nevada*

We usually travel with our genie turned on. I keep a **crock-pot in our motorhome sink** – at noon I start a chicken, pot roast, BBQ roast or some type of slow cook meal. By the time the aroma permeates throughout the MH, my husband knows it is time to pull over for the night. We can both enjoy the area where we stay, then sit down to a good dinner without any fixing.

This sounded like a super idea. If you had a large inverter you may be able to cook this meal without using the generator.

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## Omelette In A Bag

*From an FMCA Rally –It's tasty and so simple to make – Enjoy!!!*

### Directions

- ◆ **Write your name on a Zip-Lock bag**
- ◆ **Beat two eggs with milk** or water as if making scrambled eggs.
- ◆ **Pour into the bag.**
- ◆ **Add cheese, veggies, ham, bacon bits,** etc. to your Omelette creation.
- ◆ **'Zip it up'** – but leave air in the bag.
- ◆ **Add to a pot of boiling water.**
- ◆ **'Voila' in about 8 minutes,** when mixture is solid to the touch – breakfast is ready.
- ◆ **Open the bag and roll it onto the plate.**

*NOTE: The appearance is very similar to a perfect Omelette. This is such an easy fun way to add variety to a camping or rally breakfast. Enjoy and pass it on!*

## Food Storage Tips

- ◆ **To increase juice from oranges,** lemons, limes and grapefruit – place fruit in the **microwave** for one minute OR submerge in **hot water** for 15-minutes.
- ◆ **To soften brown sugar,** place apple slices and sugar in an air-tight container for several days.
- ◆ **Store potatoes in a cool dark high-humidity place** – but not the fridge, they will last longer.
- ◆ A **wrinkled potato** will firm up if placed in cold water.
- ◆ **Store potatoes with apples** to keep them from sprouting.
- ◆ **Always serve sour cream or yogurt in a separate dish.** It will last longer if it is not allowed to sit out AND if you limit the number of times a spoon goes into the container.
  - **If mould appears on the surface** throw it out because the toxins are throughout the entire container.
- ◆ On the other hand **mould on hard cheese can be cut off** – the balance will still be good if kept tightly enclosed in saran wrap.
- ◆ **Spices do not go bad** but they do lose their oomph over time. Store them, tightly packaged in a cool dark location to extend their life.

## Technology Stuff

### *Cover Your Computer When Not Using It*

Due to fans, open windows near gravel roads, RV's can be very dusty areas. If you leave your computer on a desk it is a good idea to **cover it with a towel** when you are not using it. Also make regular appointments for **professional cleaning** at a computer repair shop. I use the one at Future Shop (Best Buy).

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### ***Reduce ISP To Minimal Hours - Increase Cash-Flow***

If you're using WiFi for an extended period of time – **you can reduce your main ISP to the minimal number of usage hours.** This saves monthly cash flow. You only need an ISP for email address and times you connect by dial-up or by cell.

Before WiFi I subscribed to an unlimited use ISP connection, but while using WiFi or my Internet Satellite Dish, I only require an email address. **Reducing ISP service to minimal hours** saves me approximately \$10.00 per month. In time I may again need unlimited access – it is only a phone call away.

### ***Computers DO Crash***

ALWAYS back up your work on your computer as soon as you finish for the day. Windows does get corrupted and they do crash. Purchase a USB 2.0 External HDD (Auxiliary Hard Drive) that plugs into any computer via a USB cable.

### ***Connecting With Ositech***

It is easy to **connect to the 'Net from the comfort of your RV.** Ositech, based in Guelph, Ontario manufactures a **PCMCIA card** that connects your cell phone to your computer in both **Analogue and Digital.** If your phone is in a service area AND you have 'one-rate' cell minutes on your plan – you pay NO extra fees. Most USA cell plans offer 'after-hour' International minutes as part of their monthly plans. Canadian Plans offer good local 'after-hour' calling. Your phone will need to be DATA capable,

### ***Ositech's USB/Charger Conveniently Connects a Computer to a Cell***

This connection is mainly effective if you are in Digital areas (thankfully Digital extends to a wider area every year). Some cell phone companies also sell USB adapters but I am unsure if these include chargers as well. Ask!!!

**Ositech also sells an inexpensive compression-type software** that speeds your transmission up to five-times faster. Using a cell to connect is convenient but expect it to be slower than dialup. Go to [www.rvliving.net/Ositechcont.htm](http://www.rvliving.net/Ositechcont.htm)

### ***WiFi 'B' & 'G' Antenna or PCMCIA Card***

Winter 2004/05, **I used WiFi at three different parks** – all with great service but at Crystal River, Florida we had to change sites to be within signal access. I had signed up for a three-month contract at a previous park that used the same server, so our new park accommodated us with a different site. I loved the fact of being connected 24/7. Fees ranged from \$5-7.00 per day to \$40.00 month or \$105.00 for 3-months. Some parks offer FREE service but ONE server is still not available in all areas. This form of connectivity is growing rapidly.

WiFi adds convenience to connect from the comfort of your RV but using this service at every stop during travels is still not possible. **HotSpots are only in some areas – NOT everywhere as of yet.** I was advised to buy the *Linksys 'G' antenna* because it may pull in a weak signal better than the *PCMCIA 'G' card.* That debate is ongoing. Read the complex story reference *Connecting To The 'Net on the Move* at

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<http://www.rvliving.net/advicecont.htm> for more details and reference on where to find information.

WiFi will be the connection choice in the future but it still has a way to go before you can depend on this form of connection as your only way to on-line access.

### ***Computer Work Stations***

Many RVers find **creative ways to adapt working space for their computers.** (Return to [Easy Living Tips](#) page #29) Look for areas on dashboards, converted dinettes, removing chairs to free-up desk space or adding small wall-mounted tables with filing cabinets.

We asked the dealer to convert our dinette into a desk by rotating the table so it lines up against the wall. He added a cupboard to camouflage my filing cabinet, an enclosed spot for my printer, another for my laptop with shelves above. Be creative and you too can manufacture a personalized workstation.

### ***Add Emergency Contact to Your Cell Phone***

*Submitted by Dave and Betty Telford, Nova Scotia*

Everyone should add **“IN CASE OF EMERGENCY (ICE)”** phone contact” to the quick dial on your cell phone. When you’re incapacitated, Paramedics and EMT'S throughout the world have realized while reacting to emergencies, most victims carry cell phones. However, there’s no way of knowing whom to contact from the vast phone book listings.

People are encouraged to **enter an emergency contact number in their cell phone book** under the heading "ICE" (In Case of Emergency). This practice has rapidly spread throughout the world since recent terrorist attacks in London.

ICE (I used ‘In Case of Emerg’) provides police or paramedics with contact to a designated relative/next-of-kin in an emergency situation. Bob Brotchie, a 13-year paramedic veteran of East Anglian Ambulance Service paramedic– launched this idea in May 05 – it is catching on. “Almost everyone carries a cell phone today – with ‘ICE’ we'd know immediately who to contact and what number to ring. The person may even be aware of medical history.”

By adopting this ‘ICE advice’, rescue services know what friend or relative to contact – it could be vital in a life or death situation. **Why not put ICE (or ‘In Case of Emerg’) plus a contact number into your phone book now?** If, you have more than one contact, name them ICE1, ICE2, ICE3, etc. It may save your life in an emergency. **DO IT NOW!**

## **Must-Know TRAVEL TIDBITS**

### ***A Metric Conversion Calculator***

This is a must for Canadians travelling south of the border and for Americans exploring Canada. These calculators are inexpensive and can be used either as a conversion tool or as a regular calculator.

*Note: It is easier to find one in Canada (i.e. The Source stores) than in the U.S.A.*

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### ***Personal Business Cards***

Many RVers printed these on a computer, others use **self-stick address labels** to share with friends they meet along the way. The labels conveniently stick into the receiver's address book. This also works well at trade shows where there are many forms to fill out for draw prizes.

### ***Must Have Medications during Travel***

*This tip was offered by another Crystal River, Florida RVer.*

It is wise to **carry 'Must-Have' Medications in a separate location** such as a tow vehicle or even a purse. If something happens to the RV during an emergency there is no need to be deprived of important medication.

### ***Ever Lock Your Keys In The Car?***

I like this one; I received it by email twice so I thought I would pass it on. You could call your ERS or if it is an RV door that is locked, try using a key from someone else OR one that you have hidden for a similar situation.

**A friend tried the following solution** and it worked for her.

If you lock your keys in the car and the spare w/remote is at home, call a person on your cell phone that has access to another set of keys.

Hold your cell phone about a foot from your car door and have the person at the other end, hold the 'remote' near the phone on their end – they then press the 'open door' button. **YOUR CAR WILL UNLOCK**

Distance is no object, you could be hundreds of miles away and if you can reach someone with access to the other 'remote' for your vehicle you can unlock the doors (or the trunk!).

### ***Obtaining Meds Away From Home***

Every RVer should carry sufficient drugs for their time away. If Americans visiting Canada need Rx updates, **a Canadian Doctor can write an Rx** to be filled in a Canadian Pharmacy – usually at a big savings. It helps if you have a copy of the original Rx and/or pill container from your doctor.

*Rodney Pickles, both Nova Scotia and Ontario submitted this tip.*

He discovered that while he was in the Maritimes for a summer visit, **Zehrs Pharmacy in Cambridge, Ontario forwarded his prescription to the Atlantic Super Store** so that pharmacy could fill it. This was more convenient than having a script shipped from Cambridge. It is worthwhile to ask the local pharmacy for similar service.

### ***Medical Coverage - Out of Country***

Both Canadians and Americans should carry medical insurance to cover emergencies while you're **Out of Your Country**. Hospital stays in Canada run

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approximately \$1-\$2000 per day. With no insurance you must pay up front with cash or credit card.

**Canadians can purchase medical coverage** from the days you are away to annual policies covering a specific number of days from 30-90 (take as many trips a you wish, so long as none are over a set period).

Some Canadians feel it is more economical to buy the 'set number of days' annual policy and throughout the year they return to their home province for a day before flying back to the sun. It pays to shop around to find the lowest reliable coverage available. The only advice is DO NOT LEAVE HOME WITHOUT MEDICAL COVERAGE

### ***Miscellaneous Tips***

RVers 'on the move' constantly shop at a variety of grocery stores. ***It PAYS to apply and use the food store card*** – some fit on your key chain. During a steak sale in one store we saved \$17.00 on a \$29.00 order because of the store card.

Pringle Potato Chip containers make ***super mailing tubes*** to share things with grandkids such as shells collected on the beach or a Dollar store treasure

### ***International 'Call for Help'***

The ***International 'Call for Help'*** in any country is to *honk your horn three times in quick succession, take a short break and honk three more times followed by another break*. Continue till help arrives. Turn on headlights and flashing lights. Even if others have never heard of this signal – most people will come to investigate.

### ***Finding Help When Away From home***

Norm and Linda Payne from [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com) submitted this tip.

ERS services have a list of doctors, hospitals, tire shops, etc on hand to share with their members who ask for it. RVers who need to locate these specialty services should call their ERS and ask for the names and phone numbers in your area.

### ***How To Survive A Stroke?***

Another RV friend recently received a Pace Maker during his Newfoundland travels – I pass on this email for your info. If you see someone acting strange and/or having trouble speaking, ask these ...

### **Three Simple Questions**

- 1. Ask the Individual to SMILE**
- 2. Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS**
- 3. Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE**

If they have any problems with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. You could save someone's life.

### ***En Route Suggestions***

Purchase an ***atlas that indicates highway exit numbers and county markings*** – it simplifies everything. Directions in travel guides, campground directories, accident

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locations from truckers on the CB usually refer to the closest highway exit number.

**Post the CB channel** that you monitor on the rear of your unit. **We post both** channel #14 and #19, so vehicles travelling behind know how to reach us in an emergency or maybe to just say hello. If you're travelling with friends, **choose channels other than** #13 (Good Sam); #14 (FMCA-Family Motor Coach Association) and, #19 (Trucker).

**Wind** seems to be extremely strong these days and handling an RV can present a bit of a challenge – slow down and concentrate on your driving.

Our unit has a flat windshield and as a result the wind whips around playing havoc with our awnings. To prevent the window unit from unfurling **we tie an extra bungee** around the roll, plus we add a layer of duct tape to the forward edge. **On the main awning** we add one or two bungees to the arms for added security during travels.

### Using Air Conditioning On The Move

Motorhomers travelling on warm days find it economical and effective to **run their generators plus 'roof (or basement) air'** rather than **dash air**.

John and I choose **another way to stay cool** but most of our days only reach the mid 80's.

- ◆ We **begin early** in the day and stop before 3 PM.
- ◆ We also try to **avoid areas** with temps over 85°.
- ◆ We run a **2-3 table fans** powered by our coach inverter and turn the window fans toward us.
- ◆ We also **open our large front windows BUT not the back ones**. They create a suction that will bring harmful fumes into our unit.

### Newfoundland Ferry

*The Short Ferry Crossing Costs to Newfoundland 2005* equal approximately the cost of gas/fuel for a 6-hour drive. Because of our dogs we chose the short route from North Sydney to Port Aux Basque to and from the 'Rock' – although a longer route (15 hours) is available from North Sydney to Argentia. John and I toured different stopping spots on the Island as we drove north and to the extreme east and returned again to Port Aux Basque for departure to the mainland.

**Cost to the 'Rock'** was \$292.00 – we boarded separately. Our motorhome is 38-feet plus a tow-car. On return we remained 'connected' at a cost of \$309.00 (57 feet total) - you decide if it is worth the extra \$17.00. The long ferry is more costly. Details – *NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR (NFLD/LAB) TOURISM INFO* – 1- 800-563-6353 – [www.gov.nf.ca/tourism](http://www.gov.nf.ca/tourism)

- ◆ **Marine Atlantic Ferry Terminal** – 1-800-341-7981 (Press O for assistance) [www.marine-atlantic.ca](http://www.marine-atlantic.ca)
- ◆ **Arm of Gold Campground in North Sydney, Nova Scotia AND** ([www.armofgoldcamp.com](http://www.armofgoldcamp.com) 866 736 6516)

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- ◆ **Grand Codroy Campground** (34 km from Port Aux Basque, Newfoundland) (709) 955-2520 / 2058 O/S / 1-877-955-2520) are both convenient stops before ferry departures.

### **Travel Security - Crimes Against Travellers**

Last winter I attended a personal security seminar presented by a humorous Cop' from Georgia. He relayed the following tips – **some may be repeats** but I share them to stress the importance of each of them.

1. Only carry **one credit card** on your person at any one time.
2. **Always lock RV doors** in a campground when you are not at home.
3. If stopping in a mall or truck stop, etc.. **ALWAYS park with your RV door facing the cameras and/or the people** – not to the spacious outside grassy area. It gives not-so-nice people privacy to make your life difficult.
4. **NEVER stop at a rest area** during evening or overnight hours.

### **Several Additional Suggestions**

- ◆ If you break down on the highway and must call your ERS, he also suggested that you **Call 911 and/or the State Highway Police** so they know you are stranded on the side of the road while waiting for service. (\*CELL phone numbers to call State Police are posted along the interstates).
- ◆ **ALWAYS keep others informed of your whereabouts.** For instance, if you stop at a rest area, let each other know where you're going and how long you expect it to be gone – such as to pick-up a map or visit the washroom, etc.
- ◆ **Only open your car door for police in uniform** – request to see ID.
- ◆ Check with police stations to ask if?? **they have a sign 'Call POLICE'**. Hang it out the side window. Design one on your own if you can't find one.
- ◆ To make it difficult for 'Pick-pockets' men should **ALWAYS wrap a FAT elastic around their wallet or carry a small comb in it from side to side.** If someone tries to remove the wallet, the elastic or the comb will catch on the fabric alerting you to a problem.
- ◆ It is a good idea to attach a **plywood or Plexiglas barrier to the RV back ladder** to prevent easy access to the roof vents.  
*NOTE: During our second robbery 19 years ago, the 'kids' (small people) entered our RV through the shower vent.*
- ◆ This informative 'COP' suggested if leaving your RV in a parking lot it's wise to **stow automatic steps**, especially if a window is reachable from that step.  
*NOTE: In our first robbery 20-years ago, the 'crooks' broke a lock on the sliding window while our unit was in storage. After the fact, we added a patio door lock to each window. Travelling street-smart should become your number one priority.*
- ◆ Make it a point to **use the deadbolt at every opportunity.** Remember, a universal key can open the majority of RV Locks.
- ◆ Keep valuables **Out of Sight** in both your RV and your tow vehicle.

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- ◆ It is a good idea to **lock your tow bar/hitch with a padlock**, especially if you spend time in truck stops or parking lots.  
*ADDED NOTE: With the increase in gas/fuel prices it is also wise to have a lock on the fuel tank.*

## In Closing

John and I wish you many happy RV Adventures. Whether they include a fun-loving family getaway weekend or an extended trip to far away places – make it a point to enjoy the journey as much as the destination. Remember, there is two-miles of ditch for every mile of highway.

If I can be of any help don't hesitate to send an email to [webmaster@rvliving.net](mailto:webmaster@rvliving.net) OR post your question on-line at my *Ask a Question Forum* at [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net).

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## Thanks So Much

I can't imagine writing any book or e-book without the unending support of my husband John. His continual proof reading and helping me over the rough spots makes it easy to undertake such a project. "Thanks so much 'my Love' for being by my side!"

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**Mark and Dawn Polk** of [www.rveducation101.com](http://www.rveducation101.com) & [www.rvuniversity.com](http://www.rvuniversity.com)  
**Mark** also designed my front cover  
**Les Doll** - [www.rverscorner.com](http://www.rverscorner.com) & [www.rvrepairmanual.com](http://www.rvrepairmanual.com)  
**Steven Fletcher and Fran Crawford** of [www.RVBasics.com](http://www.RVBasics.com):  
<http://HomeIsWhereWeParkOurHouse.com> plus several more  
**Norm and Linda Payne** of [www.seeya-downtheroad.com](http://www.seeya-downtheroad.com)

I urge the readers of this e-book to check out this comprehensive informative websites. "Thanks again!"

*Peggi McDonald*  
Webhost of [www.rvliving.net](http://www.rvliving.net)  
Any Questions? Send me an email  
[webmaster@rvliving.net](mailto:webmaster@rvliving.net)  
**"20-years Fulltiming is STILL Not enough!"**

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