

RV Consumer e-Magazine

August 2014

Volume 4

ISSUE 8



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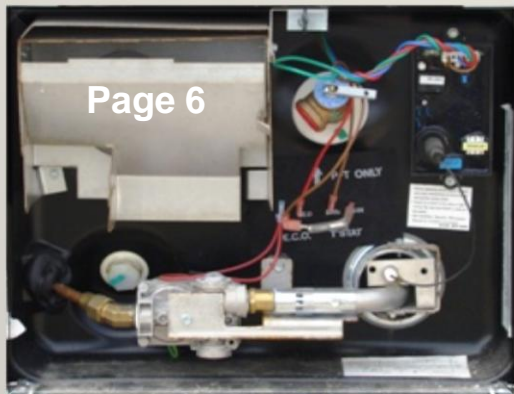
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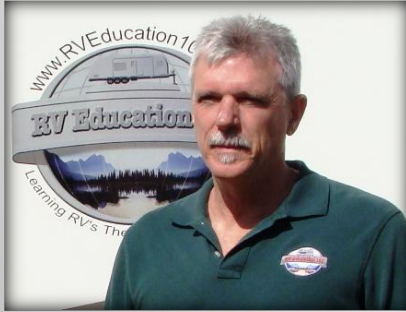
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We are excited to launch our brand new site called the [RV DIY Channel](http://RVDIYChannel.com). What I have noticed over the years is once new RV owners learn the ins-&-outs of their RV they want more advanced knowledge and information regarding maintaining, using and enjoying their RVs.

That's where the RV DIY Channel comes in. You might say with our newest site we are advancing from RV 101 level training to RV 201 level training. Especially for all you RV do-it-yourselfers out there. My plan is to offer informative RV DIY articles, RV DIY videos, RV DIY projects and information on what I consider to be the keystone of a good RV maintenance program, Preventive Maintenance (PM).

To celebrate the launch of our new site this month's issue is packed with RV DIY articles, videos and much more. Enjoy

Mark

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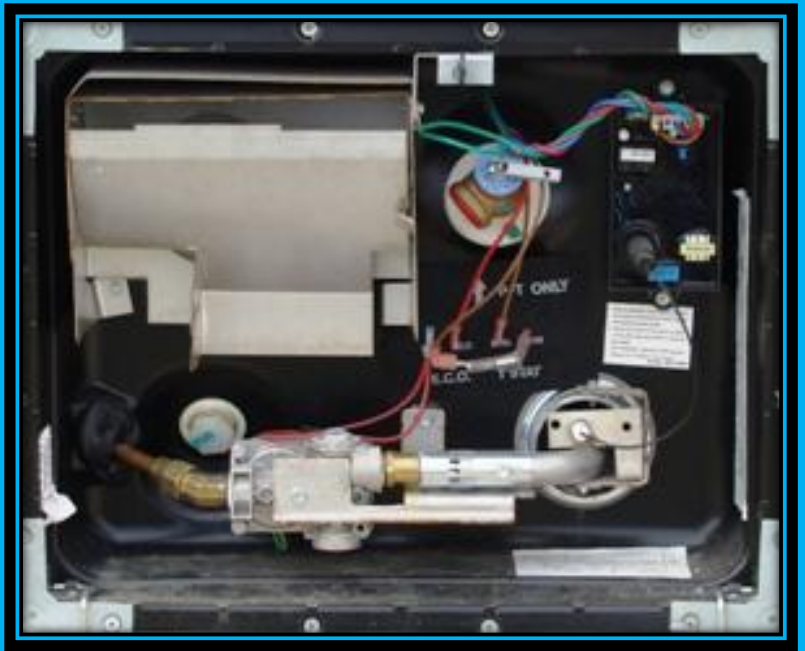
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RV DIY Article: RV Water Heater Tune-Up

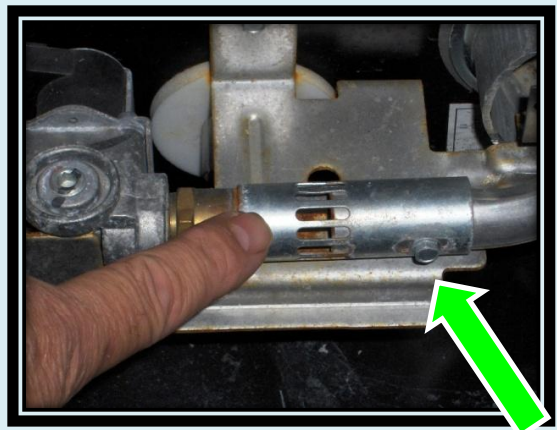
By Mark Polk



Twice a year at a minimum I like to clean and service the RV water heater. Mud daubers and other insects like to build nests in and around LP gas appliances, and your water heater is exposed to the outside elements, so it's a good idea to perform this periodic preventive maintenance. Insects, dirt and debris around the burner tube can result in poor combustion and ignition issues.

A properly burning RV water heater makes a roaring sound and has a nice strong blue flame. If you don't hear that roaring sound or you notice a weak yellow flame there might be an obstruction in the burner tube. Make sure the water heater is turned off and allow sufficient time for it to cool down. Before we clean the burner tube I like to use compressed air to clean the front of the water heater, and in and around the flue area. **Caution:** Always

wear eye protection when using compressed air.



Now we can clean the burner tube. **Caution:** Always make sure the water heater has time to cool prior to draining or working on it. Remove the air shutter screw and slide the shutter down the tube. Use a flexible wire brush and run it back and forth in the tube to thoroughly clean it. Blow compressed air through the burner tube to remove any loose debris. Place the shutter back in its original position and reinstall the screw.

The last step to our water heater tune-up is to flush the water heater tank. Mineral deposits collect in the bottom of the tank and the only way to get them out is to back flush the tank.

Turn off any water supply going to the RV and make sure the water in the tank is cool. Relieve pressure on the water system by opening a hot water faucet in the RV.

Remove the drain plug and drain the water heater tank. **Note:** Suburban water heaters use an anode rod to collect mineral deposits that can be harmful to the water heater tank. You should replace the anode rod when $\frac{3}{4}$ of the anode rod surface is gone.



Now we can flush the water heater tank.

Attach an aftermarket flushing wand (or design your own) to a hose and place the wand in the drain plug opening. Turn the water on and move the wand around allowing city water pressure to agitate the bottom of the water heater tank and drain all of the mineral

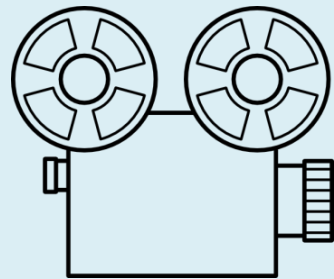
deposits and debris out of the tank drain. Continue to flush the tank for about 5 minutes, or until you don't see anymore sediment or debris draining from the tank.

When you are finished flushing the tank drain the remaining water from the tank and reinstall the drain plug or anode rod.

These are preventive maintenance steps the RV owner can perform to keep the water heater in top operating condition. If there are other problems concerning the water heater you should have it checked by a qualified RV service facility.

Have a great camping season.

~RV101



[Watch RV Tank Flush Video](#)

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How will you
Remember
your travels?



*The laptop we would've used to
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*The guy from Ed's Towing.
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*Cook's Field, the week after we
missed the Bluegrass Festival.*

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Q&A with Mark

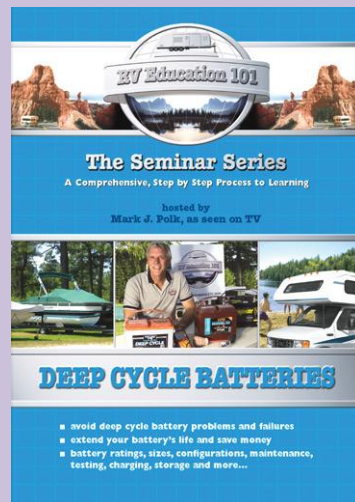
Question:

We just purchased a new 5th wheel. I want to use the AGM 6-volt golf cart batteries from my old trailer on the 5th wheel. They are only three years old and are still in great condition. The battery that came with the unit is a 12-volt flooded lead cell and I was going to purchase an additional one so I would have the set of 6-volt AGM batteries and the set of 12-volt flooded batteries. Can I connect all of them to act as one battery bank or do I need to separate the 6-volt from the 12-volt batteries?

Mark's Answer:

You never want to mix 6-volt and 12-volt batteries. To go a little further you never want to mix different types (AGM/Gel/flooded) batteries, or old and new batteries together in a battery bank. The older or different types or weaker batteries will rob some of the charging from the other batteries in the bank resulting in multiple issues and problems with your RV batteries.

My recommendation is to stick with one battery bank. The two six volt AGM batteries wired in series will give you 12-volts and double the amps. You could add two additional AGM batteries into the mix, but the age of the older AGM batteries would most likely affect the battery bank too.



[RV Deep Cycle Battery DVD](#)

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Retirement on the Road

By Jane Kenny

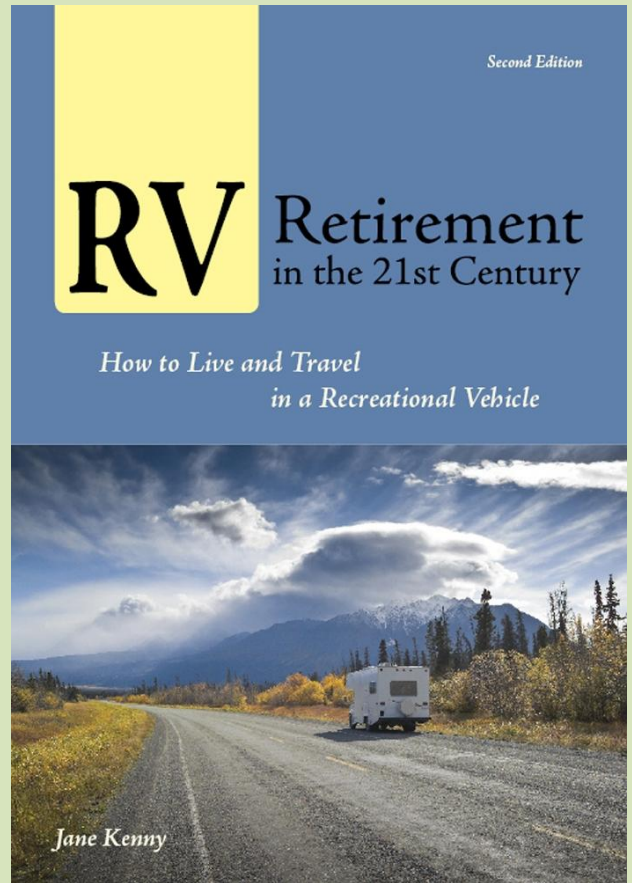
Many Americans who want to travel the country when they retire have decided to do it in an RV because it's fun and affordable. And, the retirees who are full-time RVers (with no stationary home) are actually adding to their nest-egg savings while they're out there having fun.

Every individual retirement financial situation is unique, based on estimated fixed income and the value of the nest egg. Planning is the key, so work the numbers! Monthly expenses for full-time RVing can fall well below the average retiree's fixed income, without having to draw on the nest egg. When this is the case, full-time RVing can be comfortably affordable.

How is it done? Transition plans vary, but the goal is to: First, sell the house and all the replaceable "stuff" in it and put most of the proceeds into the nest egg. Then, buy a home on wheels and set out to see the country on the "vacation of a lifetime."

Here are some basic facts to consider:

1. *The home:* Expenses to own & operate a "house on wheels" are a lot less than the cost of real estate taxes, maintenance and utilities on a fixed residence.



[RV Retirement in the 21st Century](#)

2. *On the road:* Combined expenses of camping fees and fuel are still less than the cost of hotels plus fuel for a car. Overall it's a more affordable mode of travel than trains, planes, taxis, hotels and constant restaurant meals.

3. *Comfort:* Wherever you go, you're home...sleep in your own bed, enjoy home-cooked meals from your own kitchen and you're sure the bathroom is clean. As a bonus, is dog is with you all the time.

4. *Frugal lifestyle:* Living within a fixed income budget is easy and healthy in an RV, where you get to spend more time in the great outdoors and discover that the best things in life are free.

5. *Convenience:* Full-time RV traveling is a vacation without the hassle of schlepping suitcases, airport screenings & delays, rental cars and, oops I forgot my toothbrush.

6. *Ultimate Freedom:* Set your own itinerary, go when & where you want and stay as long as you want. Adventurous travelers gain an incredible sense of freedom from being in the driver's seat, literally and figuratively.

7. *Stay put for a while:* Rent a site at a snow bird RV park in the Sun Belt for the six-month winter season. Kick back and relax by the pool, play some golf or tennis and enjoy the all-inclusive activities with your fellow retirees. It's the most cost-effective way to winter in the South.

8. *Jobs on the road:* Retirees who are still working at home, thanks to computer technology, can set up a home office in the RV. Others can find temporary employment to meet their skill set even while moving around the country.

9. *Best years of your life:* Traveling in an RV is slow and relaxing. It's good for older Americans...after all, we're retired and we're not in any hurry.

10. *Tired of being a vagabond?* If that happens, start shopping for where you

want to live when you hang up the keys. Thanks to the nest egg you funded when you sold your last house, the next house is in the bank.



Jane Kenny is the author of [***RV Retirement in the 21st Century***](#), a "how-to" book for planning an RV retirement. [Available at amazon.com](#)

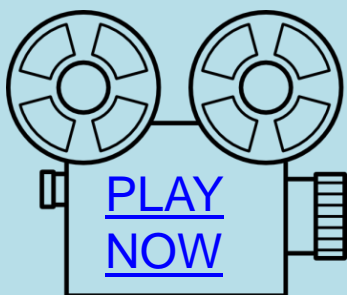
The RV DIY Channel

by Mark Polk

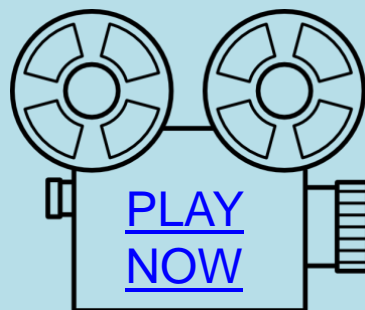
Do you enjoy doing some of the work on your RV by yourself? Do you enjoy a good weekend project every now and then? Do you like to save money on expensive labor costs? Do you get satisfaction when you complete a DIY project?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions your going to love our new RV DIY Channel. We plan to pack the site with do-it yourself information for the do-it yourself RVer. This DIY information will be delivered in a variety of methods including ,DIY articles, DIY videos and DIY projects.

The new site is still in the early stages of development, but we were excited to let our RV Consumer Magazine subscribers be the first to see and hear about it. To introduce the new site I am including some links to a few of the DIY videos and articles. Enough talking lets check out some RV DIY stuff. **Note:** When you click on a video you will be redirected to the RV DIY Channel to view the video. This will give you a chance to look around our new site.



In this RV DIY video learn how to properly [install and seal a RV roof vent](#). Whether you are upgrading to a high power RV ventilation fan or sealing potential water leaks around an existing RV roof vent the techniques in this RV do-it-yourself video apply.

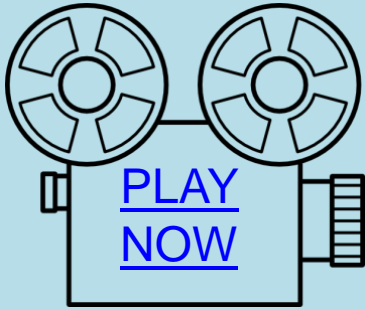


In this RV DIY video see how easy it is to upgrade existing RV fluorescent tube lighting with a energy conserving, brighter [LED retrofit kit](#).

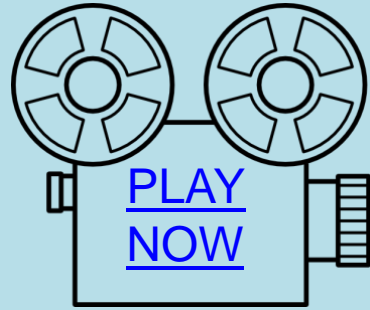
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For the RV DIYer



Tired of lugging that big bulky upright vacuum cleaner along on RV trips? In this RV DIY Channel project video discover how to [install a central vacuum cleaner](#) system in your RV.



In this RV DIY channel project video discover how easy it is to upgrade your RV look and feel by [installing some peel & stick tile](#).

Don't forget the DIY articles too.



In addition to viewing the RV DIY videos be sure to read all of the [RV DIY articles](#) too.

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[RV Water Heater Tune-Up](#)

[RV Power Cord Preventive Maintenance](#)

[RV Generator Preventive Maintenance](#)

[Take Care of your RV Tire Pressure Gauge](#)

[Tow Vehicle Tire Load Range Tips](#)

[Troubleshooting Dead RV Batteries](#)



RV DIY: What, Why & How RV Generators

When I was in the military I was in charge of some very large maintenance operations. One of those maintenance assignments was with the 82nd Signal Battalion. In addition to a large wheeled vehicle fleet we had over 300 generators to service and maintain. You might say this was my early indoctrination in generator care and maintenance.

When I retired from the Army I went to work for a RV dealership. When camping season arrived I noticed the service department was booked with appointments for generators that either wouldn't start, or if they did start had that all too familiar surging sound. I immediately knew this was a result of letting the generator sit in storage without starting and exercising the generator.

It might seem odd, but the lack of use is one of the biggest problems with gasoline generators. Fuel can start to break down in as little as one month. When this happens the fuel starts to varnish and gum up resulting in hard

starting and surging problems.

Fuel related problems are the number one reason for exercising the generator, but there are other reasons too. Moisture build-up can result in damage to the generator. When you exercise the generator it heats up the generator windings and eliminates moisture build-up. Last but certainly not least exercising the generator helps lubricate the engine seals and internal components, and helps prevent carbon build-up.

That is 3 good reasons to exercise your generator, but how do you go about it? Good question.

Safety First!

Whenever you are working on, or using a your generator there is the threat of

carbon monoxide poisoning. Always inspect the generator exhaust system prior to using it. Do not operate a generator with a damaged exhaust system. If you are using a portable



Generator set make sure the exhaust is directed away from the camping area. Test your carbon monoxide detector for proper operation prior to using the generator.

Another thing you might find odd about generators is they are designed and intended to run with a load, as opposed to no load. **By load I mean an electrical load.**



Generators are rated in kilowatts (KW). One kilowatt equals 1,000 watts. So a 5.5 KW generator would be a 5,500-watt generator. A generator need to be exercised at a minimum of 50% of the rated capacity.

For example, you would exercise a 4000-watt generator with a minimum 2000 watt load. This is roughly equivalent to running one RV air conditioner. The next part of the generator exercise equation is how long and how often you exercise the generator. The answer to that is to exercise the generator for a minimum of 2 hours every month.

Tip: It's always better to exercise the generator for longer periods of time than it is to run it for short periods.

In addition to the monthly exercise regime I recommend you use a fuel preservative to help protect the entire fuel system when the generator is in storage. Follow the manufacturer instructions for using fuel preservatives.

Check your generator owner's manual for load ratings specific to your unit. If you don't have the owner's manual I am including some basic load ratings for typical equipment used in RVs.

Approximate Wattage & Amp Ratings:

Air Conditioner (X number of A/C): 600-3000 watts, 12-16 Amps

Coffee Maker: 900-1200 watts, 7-10 Amps

Computer (Laptop): 50-250 watts, 1-3 Amps

Converter: 55-1000 watts, 3-8 Amps

Electric Fan: 10-175 watts, 1 Amp

Electric Water Heater: 1000-1500 watts, 9-13 Amps

Electric Skillet: 1000-1300 watts, 6-12 Amps

Hair Dryer: 1200-1800 watts, 10-15 Amps

Microwave: 750-1200 watts, 8-12 Amps

Refrigerator in AC mode: 400-1000 watts, 3-4 Amps

Space Heater: 750-1500 watts, 7-13 Amps

Toaster: 800-1400 watts, 7-10 Amps

Washer/Dryer: 300-5000 watts, 3-40 Amps

For more RV DIY articles & videos visit the [RV DIY Channel](#)

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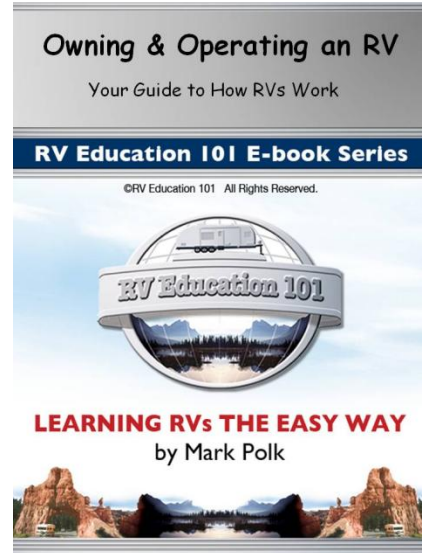
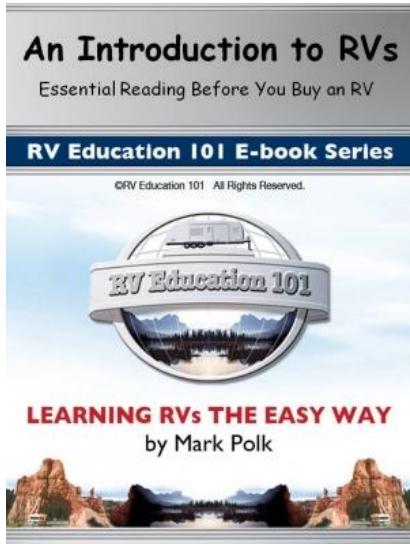


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Parsnip Pancakes



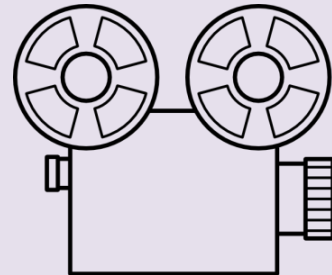
The Cooking Ladies, Phyllis Hinz and Lamont Mackay, are freelance writers, restaurant consultants, cookbook authors, event speakers, and RVers. Please take a minute to visit their website:

www.thecookingladies.com

(Makes 3 to 4 servings)

PARSNIP PANCAKES

1 pound (454 g) grated parsnips
1 small apple, peeled and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1/2 cup (125 ml) all purpose flour
2 eggs
1 teaspoon (5 ml) salt
1/2 teaspoon (2.5 ml) black pepper
canola oil



[Watch Video](#)

- Combine the grated parsnips, chopped apple, and chopped onion in a bowl. Toss to mix thoroughly. Add the flour and toss again.
- Combine the eggs, salt, and pepper in a separate bowl. Beat the egg mixture.
- Add the egg mixture to the parsnip mixture. Stir to combine the wet and dry ingredients.
- Place a frying pan over medium-high heat. Add one tablespoon of oil.
- Place spoonfuls of pancake mixture into the pan. Gently flatten the surface of the pancakes to create an even thickness.
- Cook the pancakes until they are golden brown on each side, with a slight crunchiness.
- Dab extra oil around the pancakes, if necessary, in order to brown them.
- Serve with apple sauce or sour cream.

[Happy Hour Recipes PDF E-book](#)

This #1 best selling e-book is the first in The Cooking Ladies' Favorite series. And to make this cookbook even more outstanding, The Cooking Ladies have included a photo of each finished dish. Recipe ingredients are given in both Imperial and metric measurements.

RV Power Cord

Preventive Maintenance

Let's talk briefly about getting electricity from the campground pedestal to the RV itself. In your house electricity comes from the pole to the meter, and is securely connected to the electrical panel box. On your RV the connection between the pedestal and the RV is made through a shoreline power cord and a plug. It's a good idea to routinely inspect and maintain the power cord and plug on your RV.

Your RV shoreline power cord is the electrical lifeline of your RV. The problem is the power cord is constantly exposed to the elements, gets abused and is for the most part neglected. To ensure the power cord will work properly when you need it requires a little preventive maintenance.

First you want to inspect the power cord for any obvious damage. With the power cord disconnected from the power source inspect it for any cuts or scrapes that go through the protective outer layer of the cord. If the cut does not penetrate the inside wiring you can make repairs using electrical tape.

Next inspect the plug end of the cord for any damage like bent prongs or dirty and corroded surfaces. You can usually straighten bent prongs on the plug



unless they are broken or separated from the plug itself. You can clean any debris or corrosion from the prongs on the plug using Emory cloth or fine grit sandpaper.

When you plug the cord in always make sure the breaker at the pedestal is turned off and make sure you get a good connection. When you unplug the cord turn the breaker off and unplug the cord by pulling from the plug itself, not by pulling on the cord. Wipe the power cord clean with a damp rag prior to storage.

These preventive maintenance tips apply to your RV extension cords and electrical adapters too. A little preventive maintenance goes a long way with your RV shoreline power cord and can prevent serious electrical problems concerning your RV and the campground electrical connections.

Getting to

RV Hook-Up Tips & Tricks



When you go camping there are essential items and there are nice to have items. Today I want to discuss 5 RV essential items you won't want to be without when you arrive at your favorite KOA destination.

1) You never know what type of electrical service you might encounter during your RV travels. Depending on your RV you need electrical adapters that allow you to plug-in to the electrical service where you are camping. There are electrical adapters that go from 50-amp to 30-amp and from 30-amp to 20-amp. Keep a variety of these adapters on hand so you are ready for any situation. But keep in mind if you plug-in to a service lower than what your RV is rated for you are limited in what you can use in the RV. In addition to various electrical adapters you should always take an extension cord on your RV trips. Try to use an extension cord designed specifically for your RV's electrical system.

2) Something happens frequently is

you discover you don't have the right adapter for the campground sewer or dump station drain outlet. To solve this problem I take a universal adapter designed to work in nearly all situations you encounter during your RV ventures. It's also good idea to take an extra length of sewer hose. You never know how far you will be parked away from the campground sewer drain.

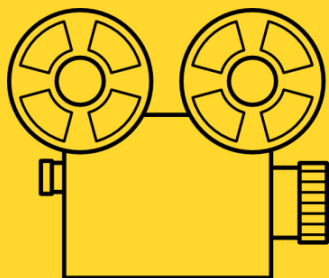
3) Next on the essentials list is a potable RV drinking water hose long enough to get you out of any jam. I keep a 4-foot, 10-foot and 25-foot drinking hose in the RV at all times. In addition to the potable RV drinking hoses always take a water regulator. You never know what the water pressure will be at a campground. A RV water regulator will help protect your RV plumbing system from high water pressure that is common at many campgrounds.

4) To help protect the RV's electrical system use some type of surge

protector. I use a product called Surge Guard designed to protect the RV's electrical system and all of your sophisticated electronic equipment from getting damaged.

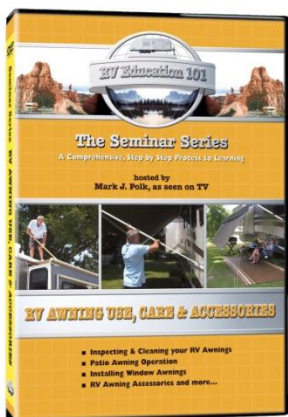
5) Last but certainly not least I recommend some type of water filtration system. There are several types available that are designed for use in RVs. You can install an under the counter water filter directly to a faucet just for drinking water, or you can use a filtration system designed to filter all of the water going into the RV.

~ **RV101**

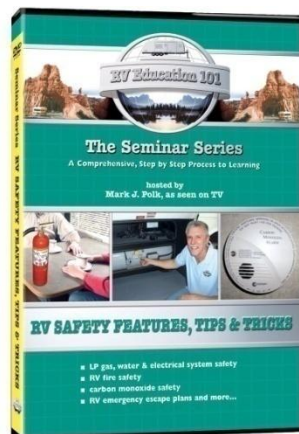


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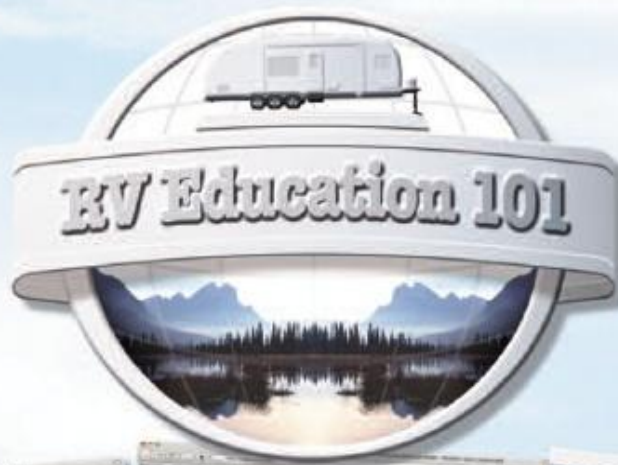
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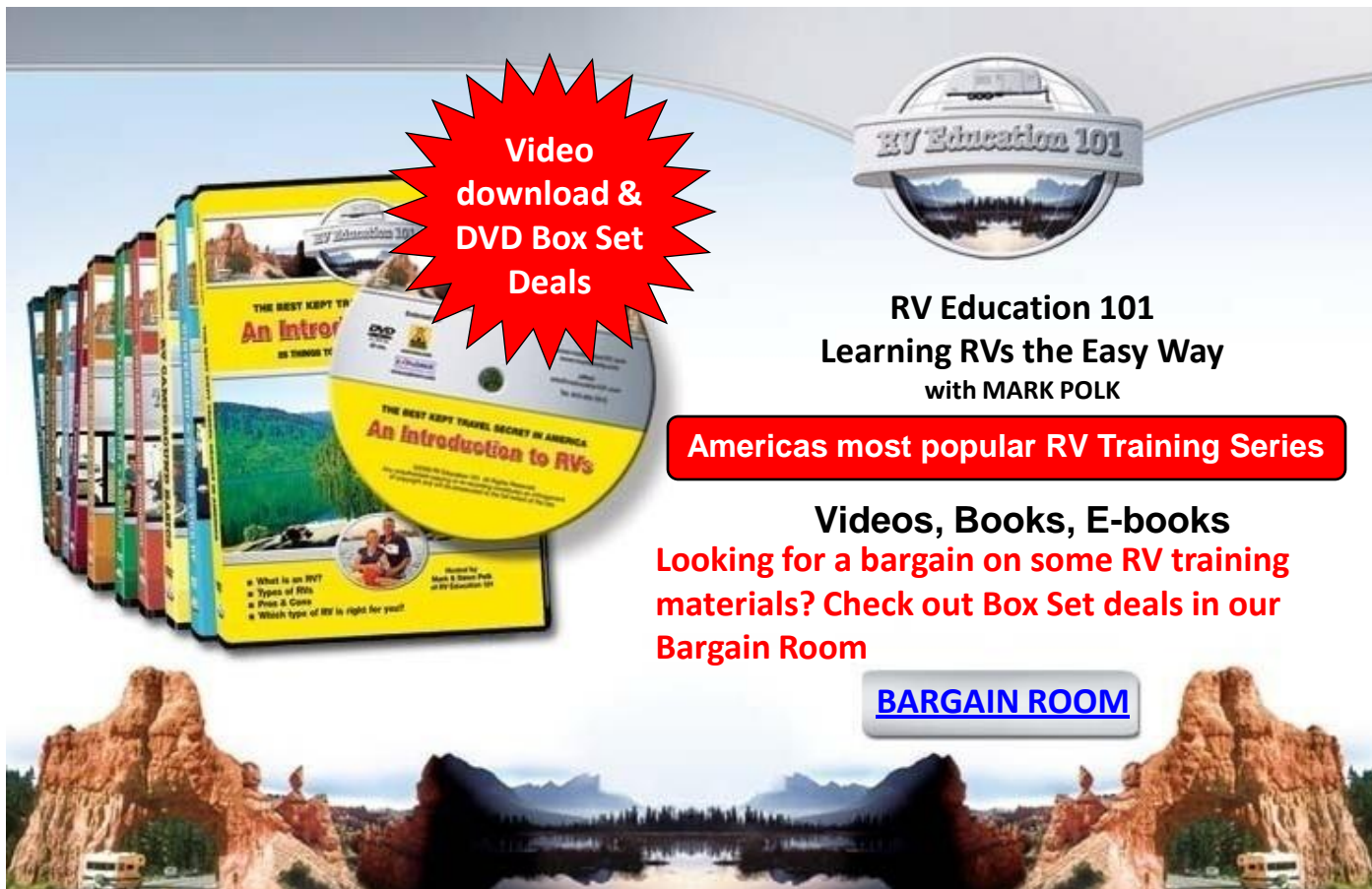


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The image features a promotional graphic for the 'RV Education 101' series. On the left, a stack of colorful DVD cases is shown, with the top one titled 'An Introduction to RVs'. A red starburst graphic with the text 'Video download & DVD Box Set Deals' is overlaid on the cases. To the right, a circular logo with a mountain scene and the text 'RV Education 101' is displayed. Below the logo, the text reads 'RV Education 101 Learning RVs the Easy Way with MARK POLK'. A red banner with white text states 'Americas most popular RV Training Series'. Below this, the text 'Videos, Books, E-books' is followed by 'Looking for a bargain on some RV training materials? Check out Box Set deals in our Bargain Room'. A button labeled 'BARGAIN ROOM' is positioned at the bottom right. The background of the entire section is a scenic landscape with red rock formations, a lake, and mountains, with an RV visible in the distance.

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RV Education 101 Learning RVs the Easy Way



Media Kit

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Our goal with RV Consumer E-Magazine is to provide you with helpful information to make all of your RV experiences more enjoyable. I left my position as an RV Sales and F&I manager in 2000 to start RV Education 101.

We produce RV educational videos & DVDs and publish books and e-books on how to safely & properly use and maintain your RV. The reason I left my job was because of my concern about the lack of educational and safety awareness material available to the RV consumer, in other words you.

My wife Dawn left her position in RV sales to help start the company, and is our Sales and Marketing Director. We currently have a 35-foot Class A motor home. We have two boys, Tyler 17 and Josh 23, both avid RVers and two dogs, Roxie and Gracie.

If you would like to learn more about us and about RV Education 101 please visit www.rveducation101.com

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