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Air Safe Hitches delivers the ultimate in safety. With only 10% trailer inertia, our hitches make your vehicles sway a lot less. By evenly distributing the weight between the trailer and the tow vehicle, you will have more ability to brake and steer safely. AirSafe Hitches are the safest way to tow anything, and they provide the most comfort of any ride. If that isn't enough to convince you, these hitches are also affordable. With AirSafe Hitches, you get safety, comfort, and savings all in one.



RV Scenic Drives

Camping is one of the best ways to escape into the wilderness and enjoy the great outdoors. And while tent camping is great for a more rustic and minimalist experience, RV camping creates a whole new level of adventure by combining luxury with nature. Some say that RV camping is superior to tent camping just for the hygiene factor alone! Who actually enjoys sharing a bathroom with complete strangers? Plus, in an RV, you'll eat better, sleep better, you're protected from inclement weather. The list goes on and on.

And fortunately for RV travelers, the United States is home to some of the most famous road trip routes and scenic drives in the world. Many campsites along these routes have outstanding RV sites, and some roll out the red carpet for RV travelers. However, it's important for RV owners and operators to be aware that despite their beauty, some of these famous scenic drives can be hazardous for the inexperienced driver due to high winds, high altitudes, and narrow roads.

Here are a few things you should know if you plan to take an excursion through any of these scenic routes in your RV, plus information about highly rated RV campsites in these areas.

Trail Ridge Road, Colorado



Trail Ridge Road in Colorado is among the most scenic and rocky in the U.S. With a peak altitude of 12,183 feet, this two-lane highway isn't too narrow or winding, so it shouldn't pose much of a risk in the summer months. The road is closed during the winter but spring snow melt can create icy conditions. Weather conditions in the area change rapidly so you might want to call the Trail Ridge Road recorded phone line to get an update before you start out.

Paradise on the River RV Park has sites along the Big Thompson River where you can fish, go for a hike, or sit back and enjoy the surrounding nature that includes very large, historic pine trees (note that due to the large pine trees, RV sites have a 32 foot limit, with some exceptions).

The Blue Ridge Parkway



As America's longest and most visited linear park, this gorgeous Appalachian parkway stretches a grand total of 469 snaking miles through both Virginia and North Carolina. As far as the drive itself, it's very curvy and winding in some areas, so make sure your RV's brakes and cooling system are in tip top shape. A list of tunnel heights is available on the parkway's website, so take some time to compare the height of your RV to avoid a potentially dangerous situation.

Chantilly Farm camping and RV park is just minutes from the parkway in Floyd Virginia. The picturesque farmland offers acres of grassy fields, woodlands, abundant wildlife, a local thriving arts and music scene, including an Annual Bluegrass & BBQ Festival.

Highway 101 Oregon



Thousands of RVs make the drive through this scenic Oregon route year-round. Most of the highway is two lanes, but through some of the coastal towns, it expands to four. It isn't a particularly difficult or treacherous drive, but there are some areas with dips and rough spots as a result of land movement, so you may want to slow down in these areas.

The Sea & Sand RV Park is located on Highway 101, on the central Oregon coastline. It has spectacular ocean views, seven miles of sandy beach, and sightings of migrating grey whales are almost a daily happening in nearby Depoe Bay.

Going-to-the-Sun Road, Montana



Although there is no set date for the road to open each year, Going-to-the-Sun Road generally opens between late June and early July. With a length of about 50 miles, It offers a wide variety of amenities and activities and takes about two full hours to traverse. At 6,646 feet, its highest point is Logan Pass, which offers spectacular views. There is no entrance fee, and the National Park Service refers to Going-to-the-Sun Road as an ‘engineering marvel.’ Most visitors have no problem navigating the road with their RVs, but if you have concerns, make sure to take it slow and stay alert.

You don’t have travel too far from Glacier National Park to get to Polson RV Resort that offers stunning views of Montana’s endless blue sky! The secluded resort is just off the shore of Flathead Lake and is exclusively for RVs.

Highway 12, Utah



Many visitors rate Highway 12 as the most scenic in Utah. With deep canyons, red rock formations, boulders, mountains, valleys, and cliffs, traversing this road surely offers some breathtaking views. Although it is a bit steep and winding in some areas, the majority makes for a pleasant and exciting drive. If you need to take a break, there are plenty of spots to pull over and enjoy the view.

The unusual Shooting Star RV Resort and campground is worth checking out can be found in Escalante. Airstream trailers make up some of the accommodations available. Outdoor movies included at the “drive-in”.

Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive – Michigan



Sleeping Bear Dunes is one of the most picturesque areas in the U.S. Towering at 450 feet over Lake Michigan, it features miles of relaxing beach coastlines and a plethora of wildlife to observe. With plenty of activities for people of any age, this is a place that has something for everyone. However, the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive does have some tight curves and steep hills, so the National Park Service offers a designated area for trailer parking, allowing visitors to take the drive and pick up their trailer once they return.

RV camping is one of the most luxurious and carefree ways to enjoy any vacation and for many folks truly gives new meaning to the phrase, “the journey is the destination.”

What to Know Before You Tow a Fifth-Wheel Trailer

There’s a good chance that the computer you’re reading this article on and the food you had for breakfast this morning came off the back of a truck and that’s why the fifth-wheel hitch is so important. It is the primary link between tractor and trailer.

But you don’t have to be a big rig driver to use a fifth wheel. The most common personal use fifth-wheel trailers are for recreation, including horse carriers and travel trailers, meaning plenty of people are hitching up fifth wheels every day.

Why go Fifth-Wheel?

A fifth-wheel hitch is all about optimal weight distribution.

As you add weight to a trailer hitched to the rear end of a vehicle, the front wheels will begin to lift because the rear axle acts as a pivot point. On top of that, the majority of the weight will rest on the rear suspension, increasing the risk that something will break or wear out.

Ultimately, the dynamics of your tow vehicle will be increasingly compromised as the load on your rear-mounted hitch gets heavier. With a fifth wheel, the weight placed on the truck is between the rear axle and the cab, eliminating the pivot point and helping to spread the load, although the rear end still bears the brunt of it. This makes sure that the dynamics of your tow vehicle are affected less as compared to a trailer hooked up to the rear.

Another advantage to towing with a fifth wheel is the increased turning radius. The front end of the trailer sits above the truck bed helping to reduce overall length. This setup also allows you to turn the trailer up to ninety degrees and even a little more in some cases, making it easier to back up.

And once your rig is backed into its spot – whether it be a motor home or a trailer – a fifth-wheel hitch allows you to unhitch your trailer quickly and easily so you can use your tow vehicle independently.

What kind of truck do you need?

So, the advantages are clear, but where do you start when looking for the appropriate tow vehicle and fifth-wheel hitch?

First, you need a truck. While a half-ton, like a Ford F-150, Ram 1500 or Chevy Silverado 1500, is enough to pull a fifth wheel, most people who spring for a trailer big enough to warrant a **bed-mounted hitch** will likely need at least a three-quarter-ton truck like a Ram 2500, Ford F-250 or Silverado HD.

You want the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of the truck to exceed the weight of the truck and trailer tongue weight combined, by at least 10 percent, which is a much easier rule to follow with a larger truck. The payload of your pickup also needs to be suitable to handle the tongue weight placed in the bed. Curb weight is also important, as the heavier your tow vehicle is, the better it will handle the weight. And when it comes to hauling a big fifth-wheel, the last thing you want is to feel your trailer overpowering your truck.

The configuration of the truck is also important, mainly for the bed length. An eight-foot bed, the longest you can get on any pickup, is always your best bet when pulling a fifth-wheel mounted trailer, because you need space in front of the hitch itself for the trailer overhang to clear the back window of the truck cab.

A short-bed truck is useable, but you need to take extra precautions to be sure the trailer is secure. One answer is the use of a slider hitch. This allows you to move the actual connection point of the trailer and hitch forwards and backwards. It is placed forward while the vehicle is in motion to make sure the weight is centered on the truck, and it is pushed back when you need to maneuver through a tight space to allow the front of the trailer more space to swing.

If you have a new trailer or a used one that was manufactured in the past few of years you probably don't need a slider hitch. The newer trailers are designed for short bed trucks. The trailers have extended kingpins and round front trailer corners.

You can also install an extended pin box on your trailer that moves the kingpin connection forward, creating more clearance for the front end of the trailer. Keep in mind, an extended pin box will place more stress on the frame of your trailer.

Time to Install

Once you have your truck and trailer matched, it's time to install your fifth wheel. You can do it yourself, but if you buy a one-size-fits-all kit, odds are you will be doing some drilling or welding that isn't necessary. Getting your hitch straight from the manufacturer will save you time and stress because the frame rails come with preexisting holes that are ready to accept a fifth-wheel.

Strong anchor points are the key to a solid fifth wheel. A set of brackets hook up to the frame of your pickup and act as an anchor for two hitch rails that are located in the bed. Those rails then anchor the actual fifth-wheel hitch receiver, which is fitted with a set of jaws. When hooked up, the jaws close around the kingpin on the trailer and lock it in.

Drop-in bedliners are one thing to avoid if you plan to install a fifth wheel. To fit the hitch rails in the bed, you must cut out sections of the liner. If you install them on the liner, the plastic caught between the hitch and the bed will eventually wear away, leaving you with a loose hitch connection. And even if you take the proper steps and cut the liner away, the hitch rail connecting points will be much harder to access because of the encroaching bedliner, which is sometimes left with sharp edges. If you're going fifth-wheel, choose a bare bed or a spray-in liner and save yourself the pain later on.

The Ford, Chevy/GMS, and Dodge Ram have options where you have a factory installed Underbed system. On most hitches, you will require an adapter will connect the hitch to the factory Underbed system. There are different adapter required for the Ford, Chevrolet/GMC Short Bed, Chevrolet/GMC Long Bed, and Dodge Ram Factory Installed systems. Your hitch will then mount on the adapter. The Adapter comes with the hardware to connect to the Underbed System. There are different adapters available. The adapter GTW rating and height of the adapter vary with each adapter.

Time to select the 5th Wheel Hitch

There are many vendors that sell 5th wheel hitches. There are two basic hitch types: Rigid hitch and air hitch. Rigid hitch connects the truck and the trailer as a solid mechanical connection. The air hitch connects the truck and trailer and cushions the ride between. For

smoother ride the air hitch is the better choose. Click to read more about the [5th Wheel Air Hitches](#).

Hooking Up and Hitting the Road

The hitching process is another reason to consider a fifth wheel, because in a lot of ways it is much easier than a rear-mounted hitch. First of all, you don't necessarily need a spotter, though having a second set of eyes is always better for hooking up. By looking over your shoulder, you can clearly see the both the hitch jaws and trailer kingpin. Start by dropping your tailgate, and backing the hitch towards the pin to first determine if the two are at the right height. If they don't match up, you may have to raise or lower your trailer using the front jacks.

Some fifth-wheel hitches can pivot front to back and side to side, which will allow you to hookup even if the angle of the truck and trailer don't perfectly match. If yours isn't this type of hitch, the angle of the kingpin must be lined up with the hitch receiver. The easiest way to do that is to adjust the trailer jacks individually until you find the right spot.

Before you finally make the connection, you have to make sure the jaws on the receiver are open and set to receive, which is something you can control with a long arm that comes out of the side of the hitch. If everything is correct, the last step is to back the truck up to the trailer so that the kingpin fits directly into the cradle on the hitch receiver. You should hear a loud clicking sound, indicating the jaws have grabbed the kingpin.

Before you take off, there are a few more things to remember. You must lock the jaws shut and that's usually done with a cotter pin to keep the control arm in place. Next, almost every fifth wheel is equipped with its own brakes, so you must connect the emergency breakaway line to the hitch. It can usually be attached to the control handle and will make sure that if the hitch jaws somehow let go of the trailer, the trailer brakes will lock up and stop the unsecured load.

Next, raise up your trailer jacks to the fully retracted position, so that the front of the trailer is fully supported by the truck. Don't forget to connect and check the trailer lights and finally, make sure you close the tailgate before you pull out.

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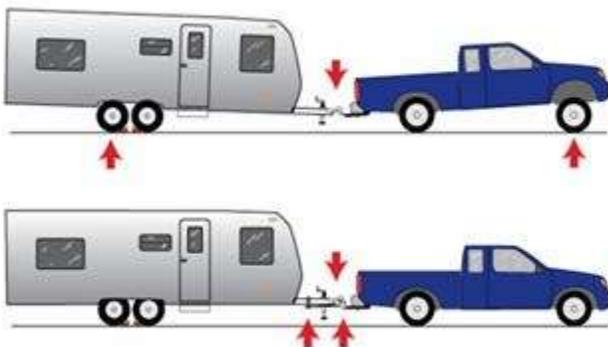
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What Is Weight Distribution?

Weight Carrying

When you're towing a trailer with a standard rear-mounted hitch, your trailer's tongue weight is transferred to the rear axle of your tow vehicle. As a result, the back end of the vehicle may be forced lower and the front end raised. If this happens, your vehicle's rear axle will bear the weight of not only the trailer, but much of your tow vehicle's weight as well. Less weight on the front axle of your vehicle can cause diminished performance in terms of steering, traction and stopping power. It can also increase trailer sway. And your view of the road may be limited due to the awkward angle.

Weight Distributing



Weight distribution systems use spring bars to help combat the problems that often occur with standard hitch systems. Adding spring bars to your towing setup applies leverage to either side of your system, which transfers the load that is pushing down on the rear of your vehicle to all of the axles on both your tow vehicle and your trailer. This even distribution of

weight results in a smooth, level ride, as well as the ability to tow at the maximum capacity of your hitch.

When Is Weight Distribution Needed?

You would likely benefit from a weight distribution system if:

- Your trailer weight (GTW) is more than 50 percent of your vehicle's weight (GVWR)
- The rear of your tow vehicle sags when the trailer is hooked up
- You experience trailer sway
- Your tow vehicle's headlights point upward
- You find it difficult to steer or stop your rig
- You want to tow to the highest capacity allowed by your vehicle's trailer hitch

Note: To use a weight-distributing system, your trailer hitch must be rated for use with weight distribution. Check the weight rating label on your hitch to make sure that a weight-distributing capacity is listed. If no rating is listed, a weight distribution system cannot be used.

What Is Sway Control?

Trailer sway can be caused by crosswinds, poor trailer loading (load being too far back), or inadequate spring bar tension in the weight distribution system. The use of a weight-distributing hitch by itself may help limit trailer sway by evenly distributing the weight of the load, but it will do little to improve sway caused by crosswinds.

To help control sway, a sway-control device is recommended for most standard weight distribution systems. Because sway control is so important, it is built into many systems. If you want to wait to add on a sway control device, you will likely be limited to a bar-style friction sway control. Trailer sway devices come in 2 basic types - those that reduce sway once it has begun and those that work to prevent sway altogether.

Reduce Sway

Sway control systems that reduce sway typically rely on friction to keep your trailer from shifting, preventing sway from increasing only after it has begun. There are 2 styles of friction sway control systems - independent and dependent.

Independent Friction Sway Control

An independent friction-style (or bar-style) sway control bolts onto your trailer frame at one end and hooks up to a small hitch ball that mounts to the system head at the other end. By attaching to both the weight distribution system and the trailer frame, the sway-control unit can supply tension to help keep the trailer in line. An interior bar telescopes in and out as your trailer moves. As soon as your trailer begins to move out of line, the friction pads inside the unit make contact with one another and create resistance to help reduce any further

side-to-side movement.

Quick Tips:

- Bar-style sway controls are not compatible with surge or hydraulic trailer brakes
- It is recommended that you remove the friction-style sway control before backing up to ease reversing and prevent damage to your system.
- When towing in slippery conditions - such as on wet, icy, or snow-covered roads or on loose gravel - turn the on/off handle of the sway-control unit counterclockwise until all tension is removed from unit. Failure to do so could prevent the tow vehicle and trailer from turning properly.
- One friction-style sway control can be used for trailers with up to 6,000-lb GTW. If your trailer's GTW is between 6,000 lbs and 10,000 lbs, you will need 2 sway-control units, 1 on either side of the trailer. You will also want to use 2 units if your trailer is 26' or longer.

Dependent, 2-Point Sway Control

Dependent sway controls are built into weight distribution systems. These systems combat trailer sway as soon as it begins by creating enough resistance to essentially force your trailer to remain in line. Typically, they rely on the downward force of the spring bars to apply frictional resistance to the brackets on both sides of the trailer frame. In order for the trailer to move side to side (sway) it must apply enough force to overcome this resistance and make the brackets slide beneath the spring bars, which would prove very difficult in a normal towing situation.

- Platform-like brackets on either side of trailer frame provide resting points for spring bars
 - No lift chains mean the spring bars cannot move freely, and they are typically easier to hook up
- Friction occurs when spring bars move forward or backward, or side to side, along brackets
- Resistance created by friction limits movement of spring bars, thus preventing further side-to-side movement of trailer
 - Steel-on-steel friction provides locomotive-like functionality
 - Brake-pad-like material offers automotive-type friction

Quick Tips:

- 2-Point systems can be used with trailers that have surge (or hydraulic) brakes
- No need to disengage system to drive in reverse
- Overtightening or undertightening the sway control device is not an issue, unlike with bar-style systems
- Usually easier to hook up than standard systems that rely on lift chains

Prevent Sway

Many of the sway controls that are built into weight distribution systems work to prevent trailer sway before it begins. These systems may use a variety of different methods, like applying friction or tension, to force your tow vehicle and trailer to continuously ride in a straight line.

Dual-Cam Sway Control

The Strait-Line system from Reese uses unique sliding devices called cams to suspend the spring bars. One end of a cam bolts onto the trailer's frame, and the other end attaches to the lift bracket via the lift chain. The rounded, hooked ends of the spring bars then sit in these cams. The controlled placement of the spring bars keeps your system secure while still allowing enough movement for free, easy interaction between your trailer and your tow vehicle.

- Cams automatically self-adjust and self-center in variety of situations
 - Straight-line movement - cams lock in position to hold trailer steady despite crosswinds
 - Cornering - cams automatically unlock and slide to allow full-radius turns
 - Sudden swerving - cams seek a straight-line angle to help stabilize trailer

Quick Tips:

- This system does not need to be disengaged for you to drive your rig in reverse
- The Reese Strait-Line is not compatible with surge or hydraulic trailer brakes
- Many basic weight distribution systems from Reese can be upgraded to dual-cam systems
 - Spring bars must have curved ends to fit into cams

4-Point Sway Control

Some weight distribution systems have 4 points of sway control built in. Typically, these systems rely on a secure connection within the head wherein the spring bars are held tightly in place to ensure adequate tension. These points, where each spring bar connects to the head, comprise 2 points of any 4-point system.

The other 2 points - those at the ends of the spring bars, where they attach to the trailer's frame - provide resistance as well, helping to ensure that adequate tension is applied throughout the system.

As a sort of backup, some systems, like the **Equal-i-zer** and the **Husky Center Line**, rely on friction between the frame brackets and the spring bars to force the trailer back in line should any sway occur.

Other systems, like the **Blue Ox SwayPro**, rely solely on tension, keeping the spring bars held taut both within the system head and within the frame brackets. While the brackets of the

SwayPro won't provide the added sway control that traditional 4-point systems will, they do ensure that the spring bars exert pressure on the trailer throughout to help hold it in line.

The **Curt TruTrack** is similar to both the dual-cam system - in that it uses integrated active sway control - and the 4-point systems - in that it holds the spring bars taut to help keep the trailer in line.

The active sway control relies on spring-loaded ball bearings that are built into detents in the system head. These ball bearings help to keep the trailer in a straight line by applying pressure inside the detents. Similar to the cams on a dual-cam system, these ball bearings allow the TruTrack to self-adjust and self-center during crosswinds and sudden swerving.

Like the traditional 4-point systems, the frame brackets on the TruTrack not only help to hold the trailer in a straight line by limiting movement of the spring bars, but they also provide friction and resistance to force the trailer back in line should any sway occur.

Quick Tips

- These systems do not need to be disengaged for you to drive your rig in reverse
- Can be used with trailers that have surge (or hydraulic) brakes
- Usually easier to hook up than standard systems that rely on lift chains

How Do I Choose a Weight Distribution System?

There are many different types of weight distribution systems on the market, each with different features. But before you can choose which of those features you'd like to have, you must determine which size system will work best for your towing setup. As with any towing component, capacity is key.

A weight distribution hitch will have 2 weight ratings - the gross trailer weight and the tongue weight. In choosing a system, therefore, you must determine the following:

Gross Trailer Weight (GTW) refers to the weight of the fully loaded trailer in its actual towing condition.

- GTW is measured by placing the fully loaded trailer on a vehicle scale.
- Rating of weight distribution system must match or exceed your GTW.

Tongue Weight (TW) refers to the tongue weight of your trailer plus the weight of the cargo that sits behind the rear axle of your vehicle.

- Trailer TW is measured using a **tongue weight scale**
 - Typically, about 10 to 15 percent of GTW
- Weight of cargo behind the rear axle can be measured using a commercial scale
 - Weigh vehicle without cargo
 - Weigh vehicle with cargo loaded
 - Subtract initial weight from weight of loaded vehicle

Tongue Weight (for weight distribution) = trailer tongue weight + vehicle cargo load behind rear axle

The TW rating is the most important factor in determining which size weight distribution system you should use. If the bars of the system you choose are rated too high for your setup, they will create a rigid ride, which can result in a bouncing trailer. If, on the other hand, the bars are not rated high enough, the system will be unable to properly distribute the weight, rendering it virtually useless.

Here's an example:

If you have a trailer that has a TW of 700 lbs, and your vehicle has 100 lbs of cargo in the trunk, then your overall, weight distribution TW is 800 lbs. Choosing a weight distribution system with a 1,500-lb TW rating may lead to erratic performance because it is rated too high. On the other hand, if you choose a system rated too low, say at 500 lbs, the system would be ineffective. Choose a weight distribution system with a TW rating that is closest to your towing setup's TW to ensure the best performance.

Weight. Choose the weight that is closest to your TW as determined by the above formula. The systems that pop up are those that are best for your particular TW. All of the options that are given will have a maximum TW that is greater than the TW you selected. This is to ensure that you do not max out your system if you increase your load. The minimum TW of these systems (if given) will be less than your chosen TW as well so that the TW of your towing setup will fall somewhere in the middle of the tongue weight range.

What Are the Components of a Weight Distribution System?

In addition to the Class III, IV or V trailer hitch on your vehicle, a weight distribution system is made up of the ball mount, spring bars and trailer-frame-mounted brackets. The ball mount is composed of 2 pieces: the shank (which slides into the trailer hitch) and the ball platform (or weight distribution head). The hitch ball is often sold separately.

1. Trailer Hitch



The trailer hitch attaches to the frame of your vehicle and provides the 2" x 2" (or 2-1/2" x 2-1/2") receiver opening that the weight distribution shank slides into. Trailer hitches are classified based on weight-carrying capabilities. A trailer hitch must be categorized as Class

III, IV or V to be used with a weight distribution system. Not all Class III hitches are designed to be used with weight distribution systems, though. Always check the weight rating label that is on the trailer hitch. This sticker lists two capacities: **weight carrying** and **weight distributing**. If nothing is listed for weight distributing, then a weight distribution system cannot be used.

2. Weight Distribution Shank

The weight distribution shank is the piece that slides into your trailer hitch and provides an attachment point for the weight distribution head assembly. Shanks are available in many different lengths, drops and rises to fit multiple applications. This is to ensure that your trailer is level with your tow vehicle when it is hooked up.

Standard shanks - those included with weight distribution systems - typically have a maximum rise of about 6" and a maximum drop of approximately 2". Consult the description of the product you are considering to get the maximum rise and drop specific to that part.

If you want a smoother ride and the ultimate in control, then you need the advantage provided by Air Safe Hitches with the [Receiver Hitch](#). With an Air Safe Receiver Hitch you will get a 90% smoother ride than with a traditional hitch, which can save you money. Glide across the highways and roads avoiding the constant bouncing, which leads to a decrease in gas mileage and early wear and tear on your tires. The Air Safe Receiver Hitches also reduce stress on your truck and trailer suspension, and help eliminate breakages inside the trailer.

With the Air Safe hitch design, the trailer totally rides on the air bag, not on a pivot pin that give only a fraction of the ride improvement. The hitch will work with all standard weight distribution systems, ball mounts and Pintle hooks. The hitches do not require any lubrication or maintenance to keep your hitch performing at the optimum performance.

Note: Weight distribution systems are available both with and without the shank. If you need a shank with a rise or drop that is greater than the standard measurements, purchase a system that does not include a shank and then choose the shank that you need separately.

3. Weight Distribution Head Assembly

The weight distribution head assembly attaches to the channel or bolt holes along the shank and provides mounting points for the hitch ball and the spring bars.

Hitch Ball Platform

The weight distribution head assembly provides a place to mount the hitch ball that is used for trailer hookup. In addition, many weight distribution heads have built-in platforms for mounting bar-style friction sway controls. A bar-style sway control mounts to a smaller ball on the side of the weight distribution head. Some heads only have ball holes for a right-side attachment. Others, like the one pictured, have dual platforms so that you can mount a sway control on either side (or both sides) of your trailer.

Spring Bar Attachment

The heads of weight distribution systems come in different styles - heads for round spring bars and heads for trunnion spring bars. The round-style bars slide up into the head and are held in place with clips. The trunnion-style bars slide into the head from the side or the back.

Head Adjustment

To achieve proper positioning for a weight distribution system, you may have to adjust the tilt of the head assembly. There are a few ways to do this, depending on the system you choose.

The **traditional washer-style** adjustment method lets you adjust the tilt by sliding washers onto a spacer rivet and then inserting the rivet into the head assembly. To increase the angle, add a washer. To reduce the angle, remove a washer. Accessing the pin and washers can be a bit tedious, but this typically has to be done at initial setup only or if you switch trailers.

Serrated washers make adjusting the tilt of the weight distribution head a snap. An improvement over the standard pin-and-washer - or traditional washer-style - method, this method lets you fine-tune leverage without having to access a rivet inside the head. The serrated-washer system lets you easily loosen, adjust and tighten a single washer and nut on either side of the head for simple, secure positioning. This type of system is most often found on Reese trunnion-style weight distribution hitches.

The easy-to-use, **block-style washer** system features a uniquely shaped washer that can be rotated and positioned between blocks on the weight distribution head. Each side of the hexagonal washer is numbered to provide reference points should you need to adjust your system if you switch it between different tow vehicles. There's no need to use a difficult-to-access pin to obtain your desired tilt. This system is common on Reese round-bar-style weight distribution hitches.



Head adjustment
positioning holes



Head assembly with
washers installed
(washer on back is hidden)

The Curt TruTrack eliminates traditional washer design and simplifies the tilt adjustment process by giving you **5 preset adjustment positions** to choose from. As a result, you can quickly and conveniently achieve the proper tilt without ever needing to disassemble the head or keep track of washers. To fine-tune the system, you work through the 5 preset

positions in order until the correct tilt is achieved. Then you install and tighten the shank bolt.

4. Spring Bars

Spring bars are responsible for transferring the load that pushes down on the rear of your vehicle when you are towing to the axles on both your tow vehicle and trailer. By applying leverage to your towing setup, these bars are responsible for distributing the weight in a complete weight distribution setup. Typically, there are 2 types of spring bars - round and trunnion. Some manufacturers have specialized spring bars.

Round Spring Bars

Round bars slide up into the weight distribution head and are held in place with clips.

Trunnion Spring Bars

Trunnion bars insert into the head from the side or back. There is no real difference in the effectiveness of one type of bar versus the other. That being said, if ground clearance is an issue, you may be better off choosing a trunnion-bar system simply because these bars slide into the weight distribution head instead of inserting into it from the bottom, thus maintaining a more streamline system.

Specialty Spring Bars

Some manufacturers use specialized spring bars for their systems. Equal-i-zer, for example, has square spring bars that are most similar to the trunnion style in terms of how they mount and function. The Husky Center Line system uses specially shaped spring bars to produce tension in the head and friction at the frame brackets to prevent trailer sway.

These bars, like trunnion spring bars, allow for maximum ground clearance.

Construction

The material that a spring bar is made of and the forging process that is used in its construction can affect its flexibility and therefore its effectiveness. The more a spring bar flexes, the more the weight distribution system will be working. When spring bars do not flex enough, the system can essentially turn off.

Most spring bars are made of traditional spring steel, which is able to flex and still "spring" back to its original shape. Some manufacturers, however, have made improvements to the standard spring bar. For example, many Reese weight distribution spring bars are made of hot rolled steel that is tapered. This allows for superior flexibility.

5. Lift Brackets

Lift brackets mount to the frame of your trailer and are used to hold the spring bars of your weight distribution system in place. The design and, to an extent, function of lift brackets can vary among different weight distribution systems.

Snap-Up Brackets

Standard weight distribution systems use chains to connect the spring bars to your trailer. The chains are attached to lift brackets that install on the trailer's frame. The number of chain links between each spring bar and lift bracket is integral in achieving proper tension in the bars - and therefore weight distribution for your load. Traditionally, lift brackets have a snap-up design.

Blue Ox Rotating Latch Brackets

Blue Ox SwayPro weight distribution systems include rotating latch brackets instead of snap-up brackets. These brackets are supremely easy to use. Simply insert the chain into the bracket and use the included handle to rotate the bracket until the chain is taut. The bracket will lock in place automatically when the lock pin engages.

The SwayPro rotating latch brackets are designed not only to be easier to use, but also to help prevent trailer sway. Each bracket hangs farther down from the trailer frame than a traditional lift bracket, minimizing the distance between the brackets and the spring bars. As a result, less chain hangs down from the brackets, which limits the movement of the spring bars so that they can exert more force on your trailer to effectively keep it from shifting side to side.

Friction Sway Control Brackets

Some premium weight distribution systems, like Reese SC, have specially designed sway-control brackets in place of traditional snap-up brackets. These systems do not use chains to hold the spring bars in place. Instead the bars rest directly on the brackets. Each sway-control bracket is designed to inhibit sway both by holding the spring bar firmly in place and by ensuring that friction occurs anytime the bar moves along the surface of the bracket.

Living Together 24-7 in an RV - How Do You Do It?

Do you think you and your spouse or partner can live together 24 hours a day, seven days a week in 240 square feet of space - more or less? Put that way, it seems daunting, yet thousands do so happily in an recreational vehicle or RV!

When you consider, that for many of these couples, one or both have been working and out of the house for years until right before they take off together in their RV, it means two adjustments. Not only do they adjust to living in a tiny space, they are also adjusting to living together constantly. Either one can be a big adjustment. Adjusting to both together can

strain the relationship. A little knowledge and planning can ease the way into all this togetherness.

Tips for Living Together in an RV

At first, it may seem like you are on vacation. And, you are. That is familiar and you have past behavior to draw on. As the days move on, it may feel like too much togetherness. How do you cope? Here are some suggestions from other RVers. By the way, most caution two things:

You and your spouse must like each other. Both you and your spouse must want to live this lifestyle, even if only for a certain period of time.

If you have those two things going for you, the rest can be worked out.

Here are 10 techniques you can use:

1. Own space: Have your own bit of space, however tiny. You might stake out a certain place to sit in the evenings or a place to work on crafts or hobbies. Claim a cupboard or bin underneath for the things you like to do: read, carve, bead, knit. Do not go into your spouse's cupboard without permission. George and I each have our computer spots and work to remember not to interrupt the other without asking permission. Even though we are only a few feet apart, we have a sense of separateness.
2. A retreat: The bedroom or perhaps a corner can be a "retreat" for whomever is needing a little "space." If one of you heads to the bedroom, you can say something to the other, or the other should ask permission to enter. Using the bedroom as personal space shouldn't interfere with the other's bedtime, however.
3. Different bedtimes: One spouse may already stay up a little later or wake up earlier. This gives the other a little "alone" time.
4. Marriage saver: Whoever watches TV alone should use headphones. Listening to music should be the same unless both people want to listen. The fact that one partner has on headphones gives both a sense of privacy. I call headphones "marriage savers!"
5. Solo activities: Do some activities by yourself. You may be traveling in close quarters but that doesn't mean you have to be joined at the hip and do everything together. Walking, biking, walking the dog, shopping, rig maintenance can be done alone. I enjoy plays and George does not. If there is a local theater production, I'll attend by myself.
6. "Jaimie day": Substitute your name for Jaimie and go off for the day on your own. I learned this from Kay Peterson, one of the founders of the Escapees RV Club. When she was feeling like she needed some space, she would tell her husband she needed a "Kay day." She

might go to the library or walk around a mall - something on her own. It didn't need to involve spending money, just some time away. Invariably these days were renewing and she had things to share with her husband.

7. Get involved: If you are staying at an RV park or resort, check to see if there are any activities going on in the park or community that you might have an interest in. Invite your neighbors over to sit with a cup of coffee or an afternoon drink and snack. If you'll be there several days, you could organize a get-together to work on a hobby like writing, beading or quilting. Men can meet other men by raising the hood of their truck or motorhome!

8. Find friends: Join an RV club or interest group within it so you can have individual friends as well as couples who are friends. Working or volunteering on the road can give you time doing your own thing plus the chance to interact with other people.

9. Recognize stress: Recognize when you are getting stressed from traveling. Packing up and changing locations every day can be stressful. Schedule some days to putter around and for rest and relaxation.

10. Communication skills: Improve your communication skills. Here are two techniques. One is to argue by the numbers. When you have a difference of opinion, state how important it is on a scale of one to ten. Often an item is very important to one and not that important to the other so that makes the decision. If you both have it ranked high, then you need to negotiate. but many decisions become non-issues. The other is to designate one day a week for arguing - say Tuesday. And, you can't write it down! On Tuesday you can discuss any of the issues from the week that you still remember!

Most couples we talk to are closer to each other and are better friends for having decided to RV together. It can, however, end the marriage. Either that, or the couple will get off the road and go back to a more conventional lifestyle where they have more physical space and their own activities. One may even get a job to get away from their spouse.

If you respect each other and recognize your partner's need - and your own - for personal physical and psychological space now and then, you can create an even better relationship and enjoy this lifestyle. Keep in mind that your partner may need more or less space than you do. Each needs to take responsibility for themselves and find ways to meet this need. And, remember not to take your partner's genuine need as a personal affront to you or your relationship.

Why Families Choose RVing

by Guest Author Karin Manning

Becoming an RV family has now reached record levels. According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) nearly 1 in 12 US vehicle owning households own an RV. That's a staggering 8 million households in America alone! The typical motorhome, travel trailer, fifth wheel owner of today is 49 years old and married, though according to a study conducted by the University of Michigan, more motorhomes, fifth wheels and travel trailers are now owned by those aged 35-54 than any other age group. This raises the question, why do people choose and use RVs? RV family members can look forward to simply coming home and just driving their RV straight into the park.

Rvers can permanently have their RV packed all ready for their next trip. There is no need to repack your holiday essentials every time you plan a quick break away. It's a great way to travel as a family. In fact, RV owners say that traveling in a RV actually makes their bond even stronger.

RV owners don't have to give up the comforts of their home. Rvers can enjoy small towns, beaches, parks, mountains, campgrounds wherever they want, whenever they want, with all the comforts of home. The new sport utility RVs make it easy to transport outdoor vehicles right on board too.

There's an RV for every budget and taste. They can start at \$4,000 and go up to \$400,000 for type A motorhomes. Today's RVs provide travelers with all the amenities of home with fully equipped baths and kitchens, central air and heat, surround sound stereos and even plasma TVs.

According to a vacation cost-comparison study conducted by PKF Consulting, RV vacations are more affordable than traveling by cruise ship, commercial airline and personal car. The study estimated a family of four can spend up to 74 percent less when traveling by RV, factoring in ownership costs and resulting tax benefits.

"Regardless of gas prices, RV owners still get a bigger bang for their buck when compared to other types of vacations," says Richard Coon, president, Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). "Affordability is a key reason why RV travel appeals so much to families."

In all cases, RV trips were more economical than other vacations analyzed, regardless of trip duration, distance or region of the country," says Kannan Sankaran, PKF's lead researcher for the study. "Even when fuel prices rise, our data show that each RV vacation would still be significantly less expensive," Sankaran explained.

RV owners enjoy the flexibility and freedom to go when they want, where they want. They don't have the stress and worry about inflexible schedules, airport lines, luggage restrictions and advance reservations. RVs are used every weekend for camping and outdoor recreation but they are also being used for other purposes like animal shows, antique shows, and other hobbies - even furniture shopping.

RV family members look forward to simply coming home and just driving their RV to the park it's that simple. That leaves more time to spend with a cold beer in front of the fire :O)

There are more than 16,000 public and privately owned campgrounds in the U.S. and Rvers, seeking a resort atmosphere, are catered for by the growing number of luxury RV resorts with such facilities as health spas, golf courses and tennis courts. According to recent studies, people are traveling shorter distances and on shorter breaks. Weekend trips are extremely popular. Travelers also don't want to spend hours planning a trip, they just want to get into their vehicle and go.

The RVIA estimates that there are as many as 30 million RV enthusiasts, including RV renters, in the United States. If the idea of 'roughing it' camping is not your dream vacation, then it's time to consider joining the 30 million RV enthusiasts already out there in the U.S., enjoying the kind of vacations you've always dreamed of!

Karin Manning is the author of The Ultimate Campfire Kitchen & Camping Guide which contains 580 delicious and easy camping recipes guaranteed to tantalize your taste buds. To immediately download your copy go to <http://www.easy-family-camping-recipes.com>

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