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***How to Setup  
a Fifth Wheel Trailer  
in Under 20 Minutes***

By the Boyink Family



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# How to Setup a Fifth Wheel Trailer in Under 20 Minutes

You know how it is.

You plan. You pack. You hitch up. All in the relative privacy and comfort of your driveway. You drive for hours and get to the campground. What's waiting for you?

## **An audience.**

They turn their heads. They adjust their chairs. They want entertainment and you're the next one on stage.

It's a stressful enough process to setup camp without a crowd but now you get to do it with one.



A Finished Setup in Texas

After four + years on the road we have setup camp hundreds of times. We have it down to a science and are able to setup our fifth wheel trailer in 20 minutes or less (on average).

Follow our process and you won't forget anything critical. You won't make a scene in front of your adoring fans, and you'll be out under the awning enjoying your favorite beverage in no time.





## Keys to a Fast Setup

**Have every family member involved.** Find tasks for all the kids no matter their age. Little ones can carry doormats or rugs. Pre-teens can carry hoses and cords. Teens can handle any of the tasks below. We've seen too many families arrive at their site only to have Dad and Mom doing all the work while kids sit on the picnic table and look at their phones.

**Crosstrain as much as you can.** The more people that know how to do each job the faster the whole process will go. Dad busy figuring out an odd water connection? No problem when Mom or a teen can handle the entire unhitching process.

**Be Flexible.** Some things have to be done in a certain order, others do not. Learn which is which and be flexible with the less important things. So long as everyone is actively working at doing something the process goes quickly

*Got the whole team on board? Good. Our process is below - Mike and Crissa are Dad and Mom. Harrison and Miranda are our teen-agers. Let's setup camp.*

## Site Inspection

Once we pull up to the site in the campground, Mike and Crissa get out of the truck and do a quick walk through. We note where the electric, water and sewer (if available) connections are. We determine if the lengths of our cords and hoses will reach to them. We estimate where the site looks most level. We look for trees, tables, fences, power lines, fire pits, outdoor grilles or other potential obstacles.





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## **Lesson Learned**

Carry 50' of water line. We've had sites where there was a lot of space between power and water hookups and we needed to extend one or the other. An extension hose is cheaper and lighter than a power cord extension.

## **Backing In**

Crissa and Harrison stand in the site to spot. Mike backs in the trailer. Crissa has learned to estimate the space needed for slides to come out and checks that before we set the trailer.

## **Lesson Learned**

Look up. We hit a roof corner with the trailer in Arizona because we weren't watching overhead clearance.

## **Leveling the Trailer Side to Side**

Once the trailer is in position we check the large front level. If we need leveling blocks Harrison gets those out and into place by the trailer wheels. Harrison spots while Mike drives the trailer onto them and re-checks the trailer level.

## **Lesson Learned**

Campgrounds will sell campsites that are horribly off-level. If you run out of blocks and still aren't level find a different site.



## Unhitching the Trailer

Mike sets the truck parking brake and Crissa (or one of the kids) chock the trailer wheels.

Crissa and Harrison loosen the “strongarms” and lower the front landing legs. Miranda unlocks the trailer storage doors and puts down the entry steps.

Crissa or Harrison raises the trailer to transfer the trailer weight from the truck to the trailer landing legs. Next, Harrison or Crissa unplug the 12V electric cord from the truck, lower the tailgate and unlatch the hitch. One of us drives the the truck forward (sometimes a kid gets to do this) to fully disconnect the truck from the trailer.



Crissa Chocks the RV Wheels

## Lesson Learned

We once got stuck trying to park our trailer and needed help. In the confusion we forgot to chock the trailer wheels and the trailer nearly slipped off its blocks when our friend with a 4WD truck went to hitch up.



## Leveling the Trailer Front to Rear

Crissa or Harrison uses the up/down switch on the front legs to get the trailer level front to rear. We expect making adjustments after the next step.

### Lesson Learned

Slide outs are heavy and can either pull you level or off level once extended.

## Stabilizing the Trailer

Harrison loosens the rear strongarms and puts down the rear scissors jacks.

We've seen folks use a cordless drill to lower these jacks in a hurry. We've opted for manual child labor in this arena instead and use a 4-way wrench.

Once all legs are in place Harrison tightens the strongarms for extra stability. Next come the x-chocks. Either Mike or Harrison place these between the tires and expand them to prevent side to side trailer shimmy.



Harrison uses a 4-way wrench to lower the rear scissors jacks.

### Lesson Learned

You'll still need to teach your kids to channel their inner ballerina while moving around inside the trailer. Also: no jazz hands. Trust us.



## Hooking up Electric

Mike turns off the breaker in the pole. He connects the trailer's 110V cord on both ends and turns on the breaker. We use a surge suppressor at the electric box to protect against damaging our trailer's electrical system.



Mike connects the RV to Campground Power

## Lesson Learned

Campgrounds aren't always wired by professionals. We've had power boxes that threw sparks and shorted out completely when we connected our trailer to them.

## Hooking up Water

Mike turns on the campground spigot for a moment to clean out any rust or dirt. He then connects the hose to the campground spigot and runs some water again to clean out anything left in the hose. We use a pressure regulator at the water spigot to protect the trailer plumbing from high pressure. We use a filter on the water line to try and get the best water possible.





## Lesson Learned

Keep your fresh water tank full. We've had campgrounds where they had to turn off the water to make repairs and we had to use our own tank for flushing the toilet, etc.

## Hooking up Sewer (if provided)

Mike connects the sewer hose from the trailer to the campground connection. We use a sewer hose "slinky" to support the hose and make sure it's a downhill run from the trailer to sewer connection.

## Lesson Learned

Contrary to what campgrounds might think, poop doesn't run uphill.

## Preparing Our "Porch"

One of us puts the awning out while watching for clearance around any trees or poles. Miranda and Crissa lay out the outdoor rug and pound in stakes if it looks windy. We use a free-standing scissors jack under the bottom stair step to minimize bounce on the steps. Miranda adjusts this after Harrison finishes stabilizing



Crissa enjoying our 'porch' in AL





the trailer. She then places the welcome mat at the base of the steps. One of us sets up the camp chairs.

## Lesson Learned

When we didn't use an outdoor rug certain family members (okay, Crissa) didn't sit outside.

## Setting the Inside

With a spotter watching outside, Crissa opens the slides. She then repositions the chairs, hangs the fruit basket, and adjusts the floor rugs. She moves the coffee pot and utensil holder from the cupboard to the counter. She puts the digital picture frame on the mantle.

## Lessons Learned

Be careful opening cupboards for the first time. Contents do shift during travel.

## Hanging Out His Shingle

Mike opens his outdoor office space.

Crissa hands him his 2nd monitor

(which rides on our bed) and cranks up the RV TV antenna (to which we've attached antennas for wifi and 4G). We're open for business.



Mike in his 'office' in MI





## Lesson Learned

Don't be afraid to re-purpose RV features to better suit your needs. Our outdoor office came as an awkwardly-shaped storage area.

## Getting the Bikes Down

We carry bikes in a rack on the roof of our truck. Getting them down is a two-person job. Mike stands on the lip of the truck bed and holds a bike steady while Harrison stands in the open door of the truck loosening the attachment. Harrison then runs around to the tailgate as Mike passes down each bike. They are stored under the nose of the fifth wheel.

## Lesson Learned

We initially tried carrying bikes on the back of the fifth-wheel in a receiver-mounted hitch rack. The trailer bounced so much going down the road it was impossible to keep the bikes secure. We almost lost the entire rack in North Carolina.

## There You Have It

With all four of us working at it and knowing our jobs we've timed ourselves at just over 18 minutes for a complete setup. Some sites might take a bit longer, but it rarely takes us more than 30 minutes.

We've talked with families who were leaning towards buying a motorhome rather than a trailer based on it looking easier to setup. With our setup process we don't feel it would take any less time to setup camp with a motorhome vs. a bumperpull or fifth wheel trailer.





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## Need More?

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