

Top Things To Do To An Airstream

Here at the Tech help group we like to collect and share ideas with our fellow Airstreamers. Some ideas will make sense for your Airstream and for others you may have a better suggestion. Please share if you do.

The concept is to make our trailers more comfortable, more efficient, and potentially, safer, for more Airstream fun, fellowship, and adventure.

1. Install new LT tires if they will fit your trailer. I prefer the Michelin LTX 215/85R 16E MS2 tires. You will also have to go to 6" x 16" wheels for these tires (see tire article in previous *Blue Beret*). The inflated outside diameter of these tires is 30.4". A quick measurement on your trailer will tell you if this is possible. If the 16's won't fit, Goodyear has a 15" LT tire that might work. Everything is riding on your tires!
2. Replace the single stage power conditioner (if you have one) with a three or four stage conditioner. A single stage conditioner will shorten the battery life. A multiple-stage conditioner will charge and maintain your battery without shortening the battery life. If possible, always keep your battery charged, even if you have to take it out of the trailer and home, still charge it. Use a Battery Tender charger if charging the battery out of the rig. (See previous article in *Blue Beret*).
3. Take a good look at your weight distribution hitch. Is it set up right and does it work for you? Many Airstreamers have discovered the Anderson hitch (see also Airstream Forum). It is light and does not use torsion bars which, if you have experienced it, can whack your shin if not handled right. Anti-sway is built-in to the hitch ball arrangement - no extra device is required. I have used this hitch up to 28' trailer length. Longer trailers seem to fare well with the Blue-Ox, Pro-pride or Hensley. All of these are more complicated to set up than the Anderson.
4. If your battery is tired and not performing like you'd like, consider upgrading to an absorbed glass mat (AGM) battery. It could be the last battery you'll ever buy! You will not have to add water to your battery again! (See previous article in *Blue Beret*).
5. Convert to LED interior lighting as well as for some appliances such as your range exhaust lights. These conversions used to be very costly to consider but prices are going down (way down). The power draw of LEDs are impressively low! You can run all the lights in your trailer and draw less power than one overhead fixture with four incandescent bulbs. LEDs are great for extending your batteries when boondocking.
6. Consider adding a surge protector. Surge protectors can either be permanently mounted in the trailer or plugged between the power pedestal and your trailer. Either way, RV parks are notorious for wildly fluctuating power and a good surge protector will keep your trailer safe from power highs and lows.
7. Get a quality portable electric heater. It will run quieter than your propane heater and saves propane. You might look for a "milk house style" heater (www.Grainger.com). If you need heat anytime, it is always good to have two possible sources for heat.
8. Look at your mattress[es] in view of comfort. One of the main deterrents to happy camping is not being able to get a good night's sleep! This is fixable!
9. What is or has been bugging you about something in or on your trailer? What would you like to do about it? What are your ideas? Ask the tech help committee and, if possible, send photos so we can look at your situation. We just might have some ideas how you could fix or change those items for the better.
10. Maintenance check-list items:
 - a. Check your trailer ground and make sure you have a good electrical ground between your frame, aluminum skin and AC/DC power systems. This is the most common electrical problem on trailers.

- b. Replace your water filter cartridge if your trailer has one, and if it doesn't, consider adding one to your fresh water system.
- c. Inspect and reseal roof vents. Do not forget the vents for the waste water drains. These seals can deteriorate rapidly and cause leaks.
- d. Check seals around windows and doors and condition with glycerin or silicone if they are dry and stiff.
- e. Leak test propane lines and regulator. Visually inspect, as well as check connections for leaks with soapy water. Do not forget connections inside your trailer at the furnace, refrigerator, stove, oven, water heater and gas lights. The main takeaway is to not take your Airstream for granted. Most of the time, things work as expected: the lights come on, windows open and close and water flows; but often times, there are little things that have been nagging at you. There are also the hidden and often overlooked systems that you rely on. For your safety and peace of mind while you travel enjoying the open spaces with your trailer, spend a little time now to make sure your adventures in the year to come are all favorable ones! See you down the road.

PS: What are some of your recommendations and suggestions for updating or upgrading your Airstream?

We would love to have some responses from the ladies also! Please drop us a line at techhelp@wbcci.org.