

MOTORBOATING

Older Outboards

By Jim Daly

A used boat has all sorts of issues you must deal with, including engine management. A reader named Dennis O'Flynn bought a boat powered by a 1985 Evinrude 30-hp outboard that had not been started for five years but was faithfully serviced prior to that. Unfortunately, the owner's manual did not come with the boat. Without a manual, O'Flynn had no idea about periodic maintenance, lube points, plug gap settings, winterizing and more.

Most engine dealer service departments can provide you with the information you need for the price of a phone call or a visit to the parts desk. Public libraries often have service manuals for specific engines or third-party service manuals. These manuals are also available at chandlers and through marine catalogs.

If you're starting an engine that's been laid-up for a long period, the biggest issues are dry seals, cracked insulation and dry bearings.

To begin, replace the spark plug wire set and plugs, and remove the prop—generously grease the shaft and splines before replacing it. Spray some carb cleaner into the carburetor, replace the water pump impeller and grease the throttle control. Drain all oil (lower unit and power head) and refill. A light spray of WD-40 into the cylinders might help soften any rust in the cylinder walls as well. Naturally, you must drain any fuel from the fuel tank (dispose of it properly, please) and refill with fresh fuel. You may choose to treat it before use with **PRI-G**, for full fuel restoration.



Before attempting to start the motor, remove the spark plugs and hand-crank a few revolutions to get fresh oil circulating in the bearings and gears. Afterward, replace the plugs, immerse the lower leg to submerge the water pickups and start the engine. After the engine has run for awhile, shut it off and let it cool down, then carefully check for any leaks or cracks.

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