

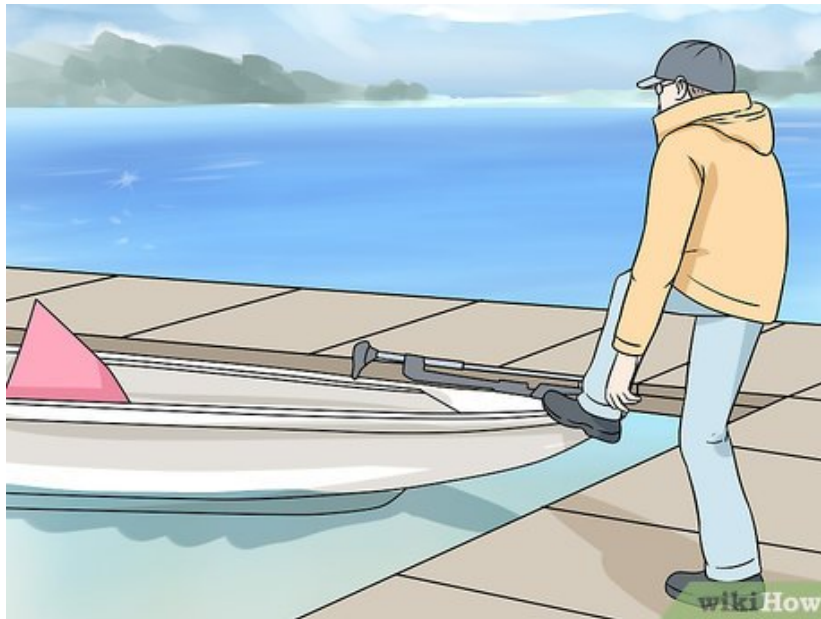
How to Drive a Bass Boat

Some anglers will tell you that if you're fishing for bass from any boat — even a kayak — then it's a bass boat. However, when fishing enthusiasts hear the term 'bass boat,' they often think of a fast boat that can quickly move from spot to...

Method 1 of 3:

Piloting a Bass Boat Safely

1.



Launch your bass boat carefully. If you're launching your boat from a vehicle trailer, make a plan beforehand and bring a friend or two to help. Slowly back the trailer into the water, then put your vehicle in park and apply the parking brake. Start the boat's motor once it's in the water, undo the winch hook on the trailer, and slowly back off and away from the trailer. Keep an eye on your surroundings at all times.

1. When you're docked on the water, push away several feet (meters) from the dock before applying the throttle, and watch out for other boats or obstacles in all directions.

2.



Put on life jackets and the kill switch. Everyone on the boat needs to wear an approved life jacket that fits properly at all times. It doesn't matter if you're a good swimmer — falling off of a fast-moving bass boat can knock you into the water unconscious.^[1]

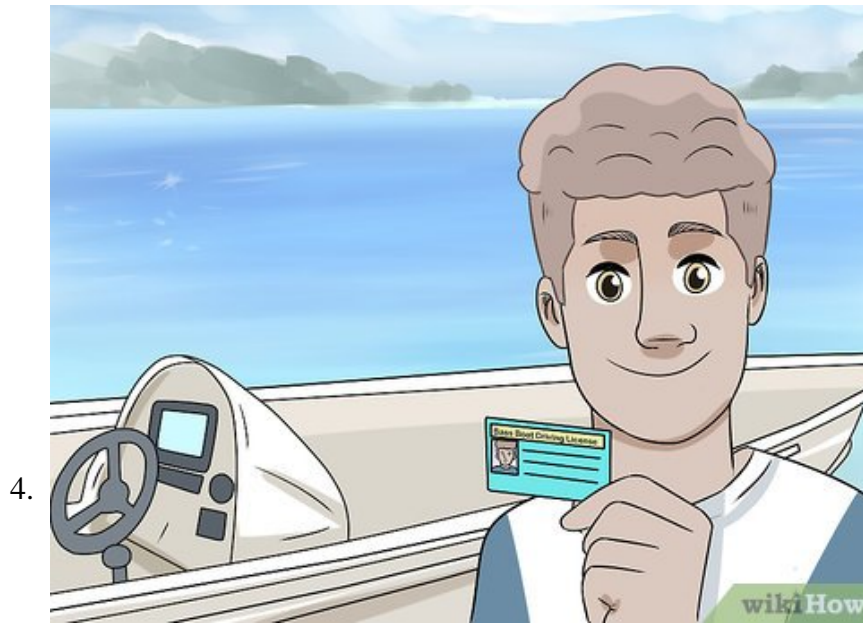
1. The kill switch clips onto the driver and attaches to the boat with a cord. If the cord detaches from the boat (if the pilot falls into the water, for instance), the engine will immediately cut off.

3.



Don't exceed the boat's passenger limit. Like all boats, bass boats have a maximum passenger limit. This should be clearly marked on your boat. However, you can also use this old trick if you can't find the posted limit:^[2]

1. Multiply the length and width of the boat in feet (1 ft. = 0.3 m); divide this number by 15 and round down to get your maximum passenger number.
2. So, the maximum passenger limit for an 18 feet (5.5 m). by 4.5 feet (1.4 m). boat would be 5 people. ($18 \times 4.5 = 81$; $81 / 15 = 5.4$; round down to 5)



Master driving your boat before taking passengers or hitting busy waters. If the boat is new to you, take the necessary time learning to operate it in calm, safe conditions. If you're new to boating, take a boating class whether it's required by law or not, and spend time on the water with experienced boaters so you can learn from them.

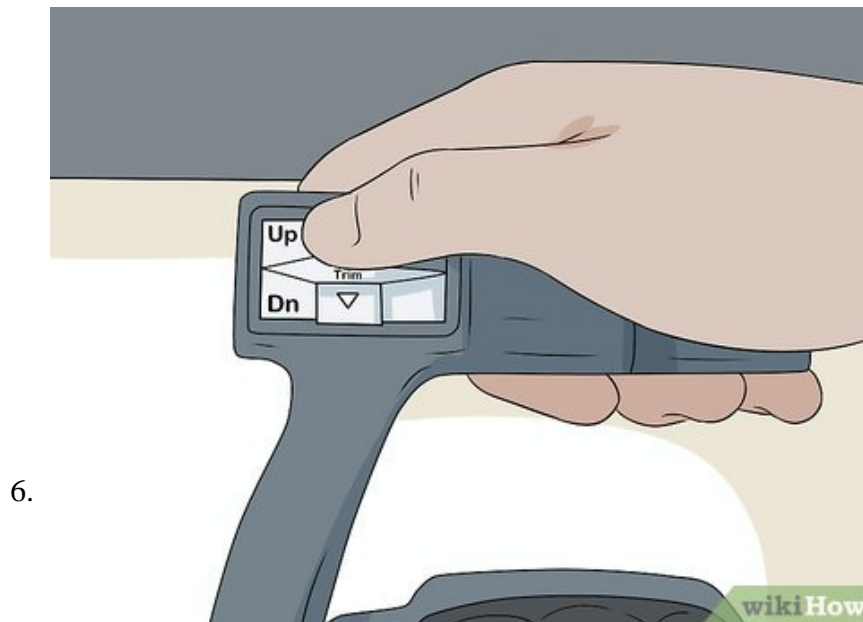
1. If you have a smaller bass boat with a motor of under 20 horsepower, you'll probably utilize the motor itself for steering (via the tiller handle), shifting (pulling the lever toward you to go forward, pushing it away for reverse, with neutral in the middle), and throttle control (sliding the lever right to go faster).
2. Larger bass boats often have a steering wheel similar to that of a car, with throttle and shift controls on the adjacent panel or nearby gunwale (side wall).



Control your speed, especially as a novice. Some modern bass boats can go 70 miles per hour (110 km/h) or more, but that doesn't mean you should max out the motor the first time you get it in the water.

Going too fast reduces your reaction time, and can also cause the bow (front) of the boat to lift, obstructing your view and possibly causing the boat to flip.^[3]

1. Make sure you know what different buoys, channel markers, 'no wake' zones, and other signs mean — and obey them. Take a class if you're new to boating, or consider a refresher course if you've been on the water for a while.



Practice adjusting the trim on your motor before trying higher speeds. Basically, 'trim' refers to the angle of the propeller in the water (similarly, 'tilt' refers to raising the propeller shaft near or to horizontal). Trimming down when accelerating forward helps keep the bow from lifting, and can push the bow down enough to slow the boat. Trimming up can help you achieve a level boating plane if the bow is too low.^[4]

1. You might need to adjust trim manually on smaller boats, but larger bass boats usually use electronically actuated hydraulics controlled at the helm.



Treat all nearby boaters as poor drivers. Often, you'll have no idea whether another boat within view is being piloted by a seasoned pro or someone who doesn't know what they're doing. It's always safest to keep as much distance as you can from other boats. And, keeping clear of other boats also makes it easier to catch bass!^[5]

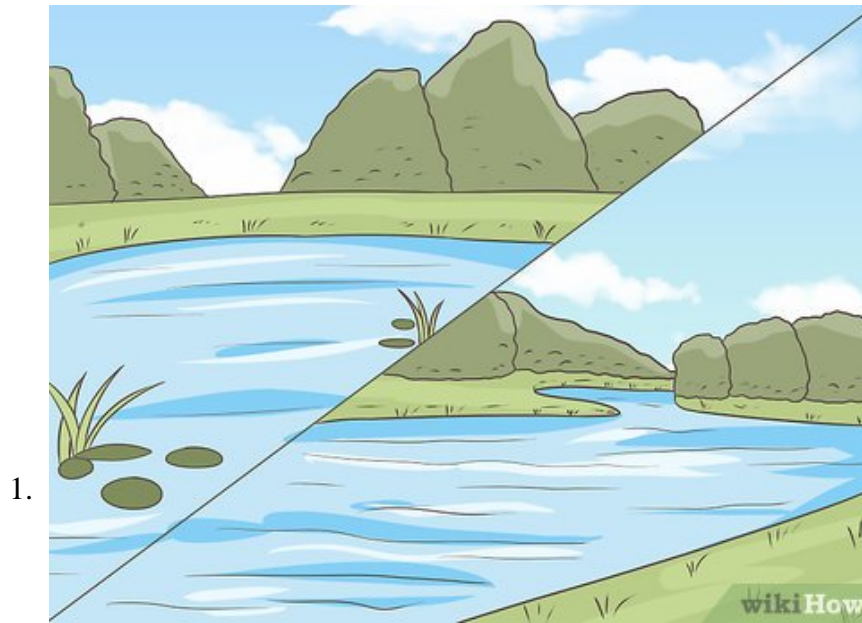


Go slow and steady in rough water. If it's a windy day and the water is choppy, it's best to stay on dry land. If you do find yourself in rough water, though, try to steer into the wind instead of with it or (especially) across it. Keep the bow of the boat a bit elevated (by adjusting the trim up) so you can ride straight over the oncoming waves. Or, if necessary, zig-zag back and forth so you can 'ride the trough' between the waves and then mount them at a 45 degree angle.^[6]

1. Approach waves straight on or at an angle whenever possible. Letting waves crash against and over a bass boat's low gunwales (side walls) is a good way to swamp or even sink your boat.^[7]

Method 2 of 3:

Driving in and Between Fishing Spots

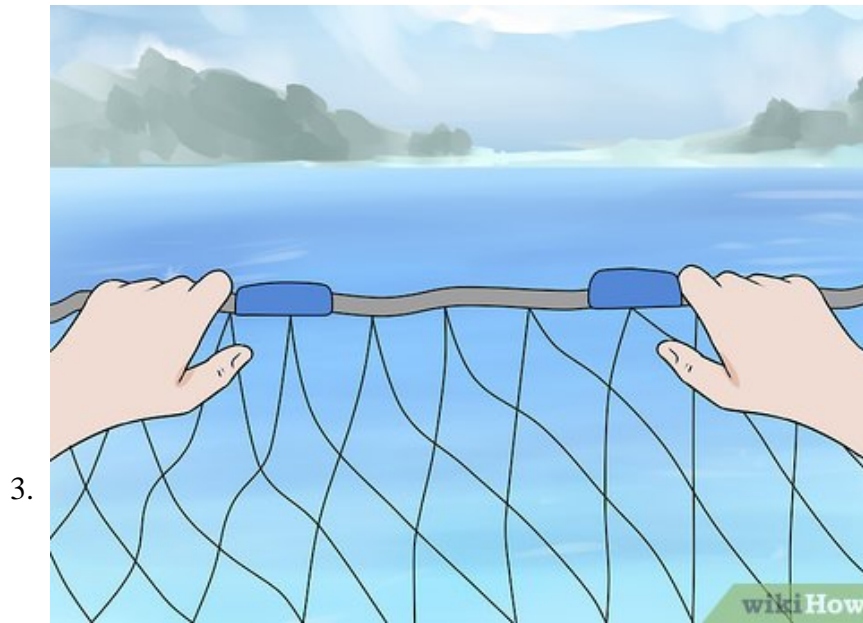


Identify your prime fishing spots. There are healthy doses of trial-and-error and luck involved in catching bass, but some thoughtful planning will improve your chances. Scout out likely spots for finding bass based on the time of year and the body of water.^[8]

1. In rivers, streams, and tidewaters, bass usually set up in current breaks or other spots where they can face the current and let their prey come to them.
2. In ponds and especially lakes, bass relocate seasonally — in shallow, protected areas in spring (to spawn) and fall (to feed for winter), and in deeper, open areas in winter and summer.



Use a trolling motor to move steadily but quietly. In addition to the primary outboard motor on the stern (back) side, many bass boats also have a trolling motor on the bow side. An electric trolling motor enables you to stealthily position yourself and remain in slow but constant motion — and both of these qualities are helpful in catching bass.^[9]



Use a drift net instead of an anchor. Dropping your anchor can startle the skittish bass you're hoping to catch. So, unless the conditions are rough enough that you need the anchor, use a drift net to help keep your boat properly oriented.^[10]

1. Drift nets are also called drift socks or drift anchors. They look like funnels made out of fabric, and create drag in the water to help maintain your position without completely stopping you.^[11]



Position your boat so you can make longer casts. Even if you're humming along quietly with your trolling motor, putting your boat right over top of your prime fishing spot may scare away the bass you're seeking. Instead, when possible, rely on longer casts so you can keep your boat close but not too close.^[12]

1. However, you may need to move directly over top of your fishing spot — for instance, if the bass are hiding out under a submerged fallen tree. Use the fishing conditions and your own bass fishing experience as your guide.

5.



Don't race to the next fishing spot. Even if you're taking part in a bass fishing competition, roaring at full speed from one prime spot to the next is not a good idea. The risk of injuring yourself or others is simply too high. Always keep your boat under control. If someone gets to your secret spot before you, accept it and move on to your next location.^[13]

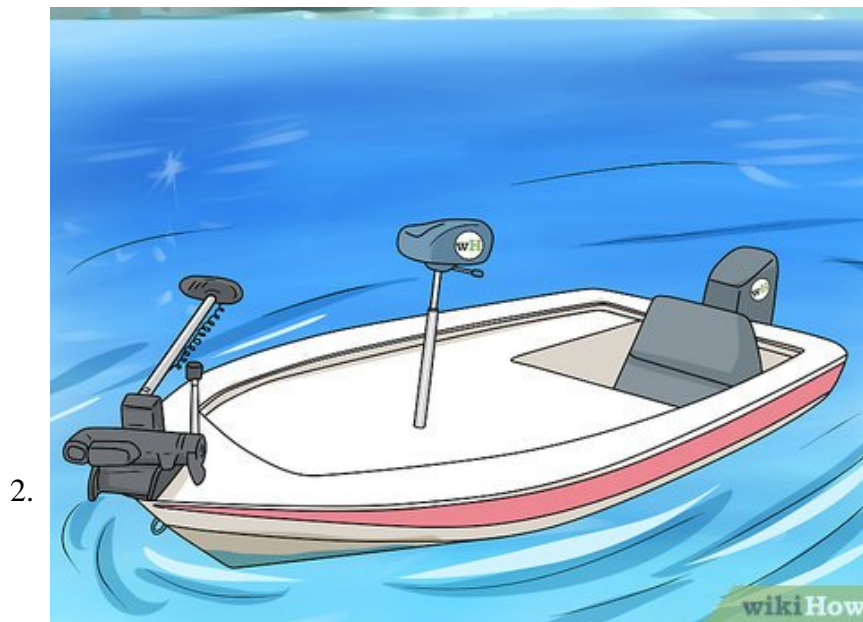
Method 3 of 3:

Choosing the Right Bass Boat for Your Needs

1.



Look for a boat that can operate in shallow water. Great bass fishing spots are often found in shallow water that is canopied by trees or other features. So, it pays to have a boat that doesn't protrude deep into the water. Boats marketed specifically as 'bass boats' usually either have flat bottoms or a wide V-shape.



Choose a boat that provides ample fishing space. Being able to fish from multiple positions and angles will improve your chances of catching bass. Many bass boats have fishing platforms on the bow and stern, and one or more swivel chairs so you can cast in all directions while seated.^[15]

1. Look for a boat that's large enough to give you ample fishing space, but small enough to fit into sheltered areas near the shore. Bass boats are often 16 to 25 feet (4.9 to 7.6 m) (5-8 m) long.



Pair up an outboard and a trolling motor. The primary outboard motor on the stern will determine how fast your bass boat can go. A trolling motor placed on the bow, however, lets you slowly creep into position while stalking bass. If you're a serious bass angler, you'll want to have both motors on your boat.^[16]

4.



Consider the many extras available. Modern bass boats can be fully loaded with high-tech equipment and ample storage and comfort amenities. A good built-in 'live well' for storing your catch in is a good feature to prioritize. Otherwise, consider your fishing preferences and budget when choosing extras.^[17]

1. Depending on the type of boat and its extras, a fiberglass or aluminum bass boat can cost from \$10,000 to over \$50,000 USD.^[18]
2. Alternatively, basic flat-bottomed boats and kayaks or canoes can often be had for a few hundred dollars (or up to \$5,000 USD for high-end models).
3. And always remember — if you catch bass from a boat, any boat, it's a bass boat and you're a bass catcher!

You finished reading the article "**How to Drive a Bass Boat**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.