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GPS Trolling Motors and Spot-Lock

Holding your spot, steering by phone, and buying the right one

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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1 The Short Version

Short on time? Here is the whole story in a minute, then we slow down and take it piece by piece.

- A GPS trolling motor is a quiet electric motor on the bow that can steer itself.
- Spot-Lock uses GPS to hold your boat on one spot without an anchor.
- Autopilot steers a straight heading or line so you can fish instead of steer.
- You can record a path along a shoreline and have the motor follow it again.
- You control most of it from a small remote or a phone app.
- The big three names are Minn Kota, Garmin, and Lowrance; each does the same core tricks.
- Thrust is pulling power; roughly two pounds of thrust per hundred pounds of loaded boat is a starting point.
- Shaft length must be long enough that the prop stays underwater in waves.
- These are a real investment, often well into four figures once you add a good battery.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> A GPS trolling motor does not replace your main engine. It is for slow, careful fishing speeds and holding position. You still use the big motor to get across the lake and back to the ramp.

2 What a GPS Trolling Motor Actually Is

Let me start with the plain version, without the fishing-show hype. A trolling motor is a small, quiet electric motor that pushes your boat slowly and precisely, usually while you fish. It runs off batteries, not gasoline, and it is far gentler and quieter than your big outboard engine. For generations these were simple: a shaft, a propeller, and a handle or a foot pedal you pushed to steer. You did all the aiming yourself.

A GPS trolling motor adds a brain. Inside the motor head is a GPS receiver, the same kind of satellite positioning your phone uses, plus a compass. Because the motor knows where it is on the water and which way it is pointing, it can steer itself. That is

the whole idea. It can hold a spot, follow a straight line, or retrace a path you taught it, all without you touching the pedal.

- It is a quiet electric motor for slow, precise boat control.
- It runs on batteries, separate from your gas engine.
- The GPS and compass let it steer and hold position on its own.
- You guide it with a small remote or a phone app, not just your foot.

3 What Spot-Lock Really Does

Spot-Lock is the headline trick, and the feature everyone asks about. You motor over a spot you like — a brush pile, a drop-off, a dock — and you press one button. From then on, the motor fights the wind and current for you and keeps the boat parked over that exact spot. It is a GPS anchor with no rope and no splash. The motor constantly nudges itself to stay put, turning and running just enough to hold the line.

Minn Kota calls it Spot-Lock. Garmin calls their version Anchor Lock. Lowrance calls theirs an anchor mode.

The name changes, the trick does not. On every brand it means the same thing: the motor holds your position using satellites instead of an anchor. You can usually nudge the held spot a few feet in any direction with a button, which Minn Kota calls Jog, so you can fine-tune without resetting.

- Press one button and the boat holds that GPS spot by itself.
- No anchor, no rope, no scratching the lake bottom.
- You can nudge the held spot a few feet with a button.
- Same idea across brands, just different names.

> **TIP**
>
> Spot-Lock shines when the wind will not leave you alone. If you keep drifting off a good spot and having to reposition, this one feature is the reason most folks upgrade.

4 How the GPS Hold Works, and Its Limits

When you set a hold, the motor remembers the spot as a point on the map. It then watches its own GPS position many times a second. The moment wind or current pushes the boat off that point, the motor turns and runs to bring you back. You will see and hear it working: the motor pivots, hums for a few seconds, settles, and repeats. That gentle dance is normal and means it is doing its job.

The limits are worth knowing. GPS is accurate to a small circle, not a single pinpoint, so the boat may wander a few feet around the spot rather than freezing dead still. In very strong wind or current, a smaller motor can struggle to hold a heavy boat, and it will drain the battery faster as it works harder. And like any satellite device, a heavy tree canopy or a steep bank can weaken the signal.

- The motor checks its GPS position constantly and corrects course.
- Expect a small wander of a few feet, not a frozen pinpoint.
- Strong wind makes it work harder and use more battery.
- A weak motor on a heavy boat may lose the hold in rough conditions.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The harder the motor works to hold you in wind, the faster your battery drains. On a rough day, keep a closer eye on your charge than you would on a calm one.

5 Autopilot and Heading Hold

Autopilot, sometimes called heading hold, is for when you want to keep moving rather than stay put. You point the boat the way you want to go, press the button, and the motor holds that compass heading for you. If the wind tries to push the bow sideways, the motor corrects and keeps you tracking straight. You set the speed, the motor handles the steering, and you fish.

There are usually two flavors. One holds a compass heading — a direction like due north, which is fine on open water. The other holds a route between GPS points, which keeps you on a true line over the ground even when wind and current are

shoving you around. The second kind is steadier for trolling a precise path, because it corrects for drift, not just for direction.

- Autopilot keeps the boat pointed on a set heading while you fish.
- One mode holds a compass direction; another holds a line across the map.
- The map-line mode corrects for wind and current drift, so it tracks truer.
- You still control the speed; the motor only handles the steering.

> **TIP**
> On a windy day, choose the mode that follows a line on the map rather than just a compass heading. It will hold your true path better when the wind is pushing you sideways.

6 Following a Shoreline or a Recorded Track

Most GPS motors can record a path as you drive and then retrace it later, hands-free. You run along a weed line or a shoreline once, tap record, and the motor saves that squiggly path. The next time, you tell it to run that track, and it follows the same route by itself while you cast. Minn Kota and the others let you save these recorded paths and reuse them trip after trip.

Some systems also offer a shoreline-following mode that uses a lake map to trace the bank at a set distance, without you driving it first. Features and names vary by brand and by how new the motor is, so this is one to confirm on the exact model you are looking at. What is universal is the record-and-replay path, and for a lot of anglers that alone is worth the price.

- Record a path as you drive it once, then have the motor retrace it.
- Great for working a weed line, a drop-off, or a familiar shoreline.
- Saved paths can be reused on later trips.
- Map-based shoreline following exists on some models; confirm it on yours.

GOOD TO KNOW

A recorded track follows the path you drove, not a perfect line. If you wandered while recording, the motor will wander the same way when it replays it. Drive the first pass carefully.

7 Running It From a Remote, Your Phone, or the Foot Pedal

Every GPS trolling motor comes with a way to control it without bending over the pedal. Most include a handheld wireless remote, often with a small screen, that has buttons for speed, steering, Spot-Lock, and autopilot. You can clip it to your jacket or set it in a cup holder and command the motor from anywhere in the boat. For many older anglers, this is easier on the back and knees than the old foot-pedal routine.

On top of the remote, the major brands offer a phone app. Minn Kota uses the One-Boat Network app, Garmin ties into its ActiveCaptain and chartplotter world, and Lowrance connects to its fish finders. The app turns your phone or tablet into a bigger, clearer control screen and is also how you install software updates that add features and fix bugs over time.

TIP

Keep the remote on a lanyard or clipped to you. It is small, it floats poorly, and the number one thing people lose overboard on a new motor is that little remote.

Even with a remote and an app, most bow-mount GPS motors can still use a foot pedal. You steer by rocking the pedal with your foot, leaving both hands free for your rod. Newer pedals often have a programmable button or two — set one to drop a Spot-Lock, turn on autopilot, or mark a waypoint.

Pedals come corded and, on some models, wireless; a corded pedal never needs charging, a wireless one is tidier but is one more thing to keep powered. The pedal and the GPS features work together, not instead of each other.

GOOD TO KNOW

Standing and working a foot pedal all day is harder on the knees and balance than it looks. If that is a concern, lean on the remote and the autopilot more, and sit when you can.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

8 The Main Brands: Minn Kota

Let me walk through the big names one at a time, starting with the one you will hear most. Minn Kota is the name most anglers mention first, and their freshwater lineup covers several models. The Terrova is a long-running favorite with a lever-release mount that drops the motor into the water for you.

The Ulterra adds power trim and automatic stow and deploy, so the motor raises and lowers itself at the push of a button — a real help if lifting a heavy shaft is hard on your back. The Instinct line is their newer brushless design with similar self-stowing features.

All of them share Minn Kota's GPS system, often sold under the i-Pilot name, which gives you Spot-Lock, autopilot, recorded paths, and the Jog nudge. Many models offer a transducer built right into the shaft, feeding sonar like Humminbird MEGA Down Imaging up to your fish finder without a separate mount. The trade-off is price: the self-deploying models cost more and weigh more than the simpler ones.

- Terrova: lever-release mount, long-proven, strong value.
- Ulterra: automatic stow and deploy plus power trim, easiest on the back.
- Instinct: newer brushless line with similar self-stow features.
- All share Spot-Lock, autopilot, recorded paths, and optional built-in sonar.

TIP

If lifting a long, heavy shaft out of the water by hand sounds painful, look hard at the self-deploying models like the Ulterra. That one feature is worth a lot to anyone with a bad back or shoulder.

9 Garmin Force and Force Kraken

The newer challenger comes from a company you know from car and marine GPS. Garmin's trolling motor line includes the Force and the higher-thrust Force Kraken — brushless, bow-mount motors aimed at the same anglers. Garmin's version of Spot-Lock is called Anchor Lock, and it does the familiar job of holding your position on GPS. It also offers autopilot and route following. Garmin lists these running on twenty-four or thirty-six volts, with strong thrust ratings, and they carry a water rating that handles rain and spray.

Where Garmin tends to appeal is if you already own Garmin fish finders or chartplotters. The motor talks to them closely, so you can set an Anchor Lock or steer from the chartplotter screen on the dash, not just a small remote. It comes in a range of shaft lengths to fit different boats. The honest trade-off is that Garmin is newest to this game, so the long-term track record is shorter than Minn Kota's.

- Garmin's hold feature is called Anchor Lock; same core idea as Spot-Lock.
- Brushless motor, several shaft lengths, runs on twenty-four or thirty-six volts.
- Fits best if you already run Garmin fish finders or chartplotters.
- Newer to trolling motors, so fewer years of real-world history.

GOOD TO KNOW

The tightest integration between a motor and your dash screen happens when they are the same brand. If your fish finder is already Garmin, the Force will feel the most seamless.

10 Lowrance Ghost

The third name is a quiet, freshwater-focused option worth knowing. The Lowrance Ghost is a freshwater, bow-mount, brushless trolling motor. Its standout claim is the brushless motor, which has no carbon brushes to wear out and, Lowrance says, produces no electrical interference, so your sonar stays clean of noise. It has an anchor mode for GPS hold, fly-by-wire steering, and a lift-assist to make raising it easier. It ships with a sonar transducer built into the nose.

The Ghost comes in a few shaft lengths and runs on twenty-four or thirty-six volts. Like Garmin, it fits best with its own brand of fish finders, in this case Lowrance displays, over the shared marine network. It is freshwater-rated, so it is not the pick for serious saltwater use. As always, the exact thrust and run-time numbers vary a little between listings, so confirm them on Lowrance's own spec sheet for the model you want.

- Freshwater brushless motor with a GPS anchor mode.
- Brushless design aims to keep sonar free of electrical noise.
- Built-in transducer and tight tie-in to Lowrance fish finders.
- Confirm thrust and run-time on the official spec sheet before buying.

WATCH OUT

The Ghost is built for freshwater. If you plan to fish saltwater or brackish water, look specifically for a saltwater-rated motor instead, or you will invite corrosion.

11 Brushed Versus Brushless Motors

You will see the word brushless on the pricier models. The motor inside the lower unit comes in two basic types. Older and cheaper motors are brushed, meaning they use small carbon contacts called brushes to deliver power to the spinning part. Those brushes slowly wear down over years of use and can eventually need replacing. Brushed motors are proven and affordable, and millions of them work fine for a long time.

Newer premium motors are brushless. They have no brushes to wear out, tend to run quieter and cooler, often squeeze more run time out of a battery, and produce less electrical interference. The trade-off is simply cost: brushless motors sit at the higher end of the price range. For a casual angler, a good brushed motor is perfectly fine. For someone on the water constantly, the efficiency and longevity of brushless can earn its keep.

- Brushed motors are proven, affordable, and work well for most people.
- Brushed motors have contacts that slowly wear over the years.
- Brushless motors run quieter, often last longer, and sip less battery.
- Brushless motors cost more up front.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Quieter is not just comfort. A brushless motor that puts out less electrical noise helps keep your fish finder's picture clean, which matters if you lean on sonar a lot.

12 Thrust: How Much Pulling Power You Need

Thrust is the single most misunderstood number, so let me make it simple. Thrust, measured in pounds, is the motor's pulling power, not its speed. More thrust does not mean a faster boat; it means more muscle to move a heavier boat and to hold it against wind and current. A common starting rule of thumb is about two pounds of thrust for every hundred pounds of fully loaded boat weight, and that is a minimum, not a luxury number.

So add it up honestly. Take the boat, the motor and batteries, the gear, the cooler, and the people aboard. A boat and crew that together weigh around three thousand pounds points you toward at least sixty pounds of thrust by that rule, and more is wise if you fish windy, open water like Lake Erie. Wind and current are the real reason to buy extra thrust, because the motor needs reserve power to hold you in a blow.

- Thrust is pulling power, not top speed.
- Rule of thumb: about two pounds of thrust per hundred pounds of loaded boat.
- Weigh everything: boat, batteries, gear, cooler, and people.

- Buy extra thrust if you fish windy, open water.

> **TIP**
> When in doubt, size up on thrust. A bigger motor loafing along uses less effort to hold a spot than a small one straining, so it can actually be gentler on your battery.

13 Matching the Motor to Your Boat

Thrust ties closely to the boat you have, so let me put it in real terms. Think of it in rough bands. A small aluminum boat, a canoe, or a kayak is happy with a modest motor in the lower thrust range.

A typical mid-size fishing boat wants a motor in the middle of the range for comfortable all-day control. A big, heavy bass or walleye boat that fishes windy water calls for a high-thrust motor at the top of the scale. These are starting points, not hard rules.

Your boat	Roughly	Usually
Canoe, kayak, small jon boat	Lower thrust	Twelve volt, one battery
Mid-size fishing boat	Mid-range thrust	Twenty-four volt, two batteries
Large bass or walleye boat	High thrust	Thirty-six volt, three batteries
Windy, open water like Erie	Size up on thrust	Extra battery reserve

> **WATCH OUT**
> An undersized motor will disappoint you on the first windy day. It will struggle to hold Spot-Lock, run itself hard, and drain the battery. Match the motor to your heaviest, windiest day, not your calmest.

The sources do not all agree on exact numbers, which is why I keep it to bands. What matters is honesty about your own fishing: a light boat on a calm pond needs far less

than a heavy rig on open water. If you are between two sizes, remember that the GPS features all work harder on heavier boats, so leaning toward more thrust makes Spot-Lock and autopilot steadier.

14 Voltage and Shaft Length

Thrust and voltage go hand in hand, and voltage decides how many batteries you need. Trolling motors run on twelve, twenty-four, or thirty-six volts. In general, the more thrust a motor makes, the higher the voltage it needs.

Lower-thrust motors tend to be twelve volt and run on a single battery. Mid-range motors are usually twenty-four volt and need two batteries wired together. The strongest motors are thirty-six volt and need three batteries wired in a chain.

- More thrust generally means higher voltage.
- Twelve volt: one battery, modest thrust, simplest setup.
- Twenty-four volt: two batteries, mid-range thrust.
- Thirty-six volt: three batteries, the most thrust and efficiency.

Shaft length matters just as much. The shaft is the long tube between the motor head and the propeller. It must be long enough that the prop stays well underwater, even when the boat rocks in waves. If the shaft is too short, the prop breaks the surface, cavitates, and makes a racket while losing its grip on the water. Too long is less of a problem, but it is more to stow and can bump the bottom in the shallows.

1. Measure from where the motor mounts on the bow down to the waterline.
2. Match that measurement to the maker's shaft-length chart.
3. Add several inches if you often fish rough, choppy water.
4. Confirm against the brand's current guide before you buy.

> **TIP**
>
> When between two shaft lengths, choose the longer one. A prop that stays buried in the waves is quieter, grips better, and holds your spot more steadily than one that keeps slapping the surface.

15 Where It Mounts, Auto Stow and Deploy, and Power Trim

Trolling motors mount in one of two places. A transom motor clamps to the back, next to the big engine, and is common on small boats and kayaks. A bow motor mounts up front on the nose of the boat.

Nearly all GPS and Spot-Lock motors are bow-mount, because pulling the boat from the front gives far better, more precise control than pushing it from the back — the way a cart is easier to pull than to push. You need a flat, solid spot on the front deck and, usually, a mounting bracket.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Pulling from the bow is why GPS motors steer so precisely. A back-mounted motor pushing a boat around is much harder to hold on a tight spot.

A trolling motor shaft and head are heavy and awkward to lift by hand, especially a long thirty-six volt motor dripping with water. On simpler models you heave it up onto the deck yourself when you are done. On premium models like the Minn Kota Ulterra, the motor stows and deploys automatically: you press a button and it raises or lowers itself into the cradle.

No lifting, no bending, no strain. Those same models often add power trim, which lets you raise or lower how deep the running motor sits with a button.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> If lifting a heavy motor is the thing that worries you most, do not talk yourself out of the self-deploying model to save money. It is the feature people thank me for most often.

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16 Batteries, Charging, and Battery Care

The motor is only half the purchase — the batteries matter just as much. Your trolling motor runs on deep-cycle batteries, which are built to be drained slowly and recharged over and over, unlike a car battery. You have two broad choices.

Traditional lead-acid batteries, including the sealed AGM type, are the old standard: affordable, available everywhere, and proven. Their drawbacks are weight and a shorter usable life. A single lead-acid battery can weigh well over fifty pounds, and you may need two or three.

Lithium batteries, the newer option, are dramatically lighter — often a third the weight of a comparable lead-acid battery — and they tend to last far longer and deliver steadier power as they drain. The catch is price: lithium costs considerably more up front. Over years of use, many anglers feel lithium pays for itself in longevity and in the weight saved, but the honest trade-off is cash now versus savings and comfort later.

WATCH OUT

Do not use a car or starting battery for a trolling motor. They are not made to be drained deeply and will fail quickly. You need deep-cycle batteries, and lithium ones need a charger made for lithium.

Most serious anglers install an onboard charger — a unit that mounts in the boat with a cord you plug into the wall at home. With a multi-bank charger, all your trolling batteries charge at once overnight. Beyond charging, the habits are simple: recharge after every trip rather than storing a battery drained, keep the terminals clean and tight, and in our Ohio winters bring the batteries somewhere that will not freeze solid. A battery left dead and cold all winter often will not come back.

GOOD TO KNOW

Many GPS motors show you the battery level right on the remote or app. Glance at it during the day, especially when the wind has the motor working hard, so you are never surprised at the far end of the lake.

17 What It Really Costs

A GPS trolling motor is a real investment, so go in with clear eyes. A basic GPS-equipped bow motor generally starts in the high hundreds of dollars. The popular mid-range models with Spot-Lock, autopilot, and recorded paths usually land somewhere in the low-to-mid four figures. The top models, with the most thrust, brushless motors, and automatic stow and deploy, climb well up into the four figures. Please confirm current prices, because they move.

Then remember the motor is not the whole bill. Deep-cycle batteries, especially lithium, can add a large sum of their own, and an onboard charger adds more. A mounting bracket may be needed. None of this is meant to scare you off, only to keep you from being surprised at the register. When you tally a motor, batteries, and a charger together, budget generously.

- Basic GPS bow motor: high hundreds of dollars and up.
- Popular mid-range with full GPS features: low-to-mid four figures.
- Top-end models: well into the four figures.
- Batteries and a charger add a significant amount on top.

TIP

Price the batteries and charger before you fall in love with a motor. On a thirty-six volt setup, three good batteries plus a charger can rival the cost of the motor itself. Confirm all current prices locally.

18 Freshwater Versus Saltwater

If you only fish Ohio lakes you can skip part of this, but it is worth understanding. Salt water is brutally hard on metal and electronics, so trolling motors are built in freshwater and saltwater versions. Saltwater models, like Minn Kota's Riptide line, use extra corrosion protection, sacrificial parts that corrode in place of the important ones, and sealed hardware made to shrug off salt spray. A freshwater-only motor used in salt will corrode and fail far sooner.

For a Portage County angler fishing inland lakes and Lake Erie, a freshwater motor is the right and usual choice, and it saves money over the saltwater version. The only reason to pay for a saltwater model here is if you travel to fish the coast. If you do, rinse any motor with fresh water after salt exposure regardless, because even a saltwater-rated motor lasts longer with a rinse.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Lake Erie is freshwater, so you do not need a saltwater motor to fish it. Save that expense for genuine ocean or coastal fishing.

19 Setting Up the App, Updates, and Built-In Sonar

After the motor is mounted and wired, you pair the remote and, if you want, the phone app. The app is a free download from the Apple App Store or Google Play, and you create an account and connect it to the motor over its own wireless signal or Bluetooth. Minn Kota's is called One-Boat Network; Garmin and Lowrance have their own.

1. Download the maker's free app and create an account.
2. Pair the remote and the app with the motor following the prompts.
3. Check for a software update when the motor is new.
4. Run updates at home or the ramp, never mid-lake.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> If a feature the salesman promised seems missing, check for a software update before you worry. Makers often add big features to motors already sold through these free updates.

Many GPS motors also double as a mount for your fish finder's eye underwater. The part of a fish finder that actually looks into the water is a small device called a transducer. On many GPS trolling motors, a transducer is built right into the lower unit or the nose, aimed straight down as the motor hangs in the water.

That feeds a clean picture up to your fish finder without you mounting a separate transducer on the hull. The catch is that the built-in transducer usually plays nicest with that same brand of fish finder, so confirm cross-brand use before counting on it. A built-in transducer feeds a display; it does not replace one.

20 Common Mistakes and Everyday Troubleshooting

Most trouble with a new GPS motor comes not from the motor but from the setup around it. After helping folks with gear like this for years, the same few mistakes come up again and again, and every one is easy to avoid once you know to watch for it.

- Buying too little thrust to save money, then struggling on the first windy day.
- Getting a shaft that is too short, so the prop slaps the surface in waves.
- Using a car or starting battery instead of a deep-cycle one.
- Forgetting to budget for batteries and a charger on top of the motor.
- Never pairing the app, and missing the free updates that add features.
- Leaving the remote loose in the boat, where it goes overboard.

WATCH OUT

The two costliest mistakes are too little thrust and too short a shaft, because you cannot fix either without buying another motor. Measure carefully and size up when unsure.

My Spot-Lock keeps wandering more than usual.

First suspect the wind, which the motor fights harder on a rough day. Also check your battery charge, because a weak battery gives the motor less muscle to hold you. A heavy tree canopy or steep bank overhead can also weaken the GPS signal.

The remote will not control the motor.

Usually it has lost its pairing or its own battery is low. Re-pair the remote following the app or manual, and check or charge the remote's battery. Keep a spare set of the remote's batteries in the boat if it takes replaceable ones.

The motor is loud and the prop is slapping.

The prop is breaking the surface, which means it is riding too shallow — either from a short shaft or from power trim set too high. Lower the motor deeper, and in waves that is a sign the shaft may be too short for your boat.

TIP

When anything acts strange, glance at the battery level first. A surprising share of trolling-motor gremlins are simply a battery running low and the motor losing its strength.

21 Maintenance, Winter Storage, and Is One Right for You?

A trolling motor does not ask for much, but the little it asks pays off. After trips, clear any weeds or fishing line wrapped around the propeller shaft, because line can work its way into the seals and cause real damage over time. Rinse off mud and grime, check that the mount bolts are snug, and look the shaft over for nicks.

- Clear weeds and fishing line off the prop shaft after trips.
- Rinse off grime and keep the mount bolts snug.
- Over winter, store batteries where they will not freeze, and keep them charged.
- In spring, update the software and inspect before the first trip.

WATCH OUT

Fishing line wrapped tight around the prop shaft is a quiet killer. Left there, it can chew into the seals and let water in. Check for it and cut it away every few trips.

Before you spend real money, here is an honest gut check. Do you fish a lot, and does the wind ruin your spots? If you are on the water often and keep drifting off good structure, Spot-Lock alone can transform your fishing.

Is lifting and steering getting hard on your body? The remote, the autopilot, and the self-deploying models exist exactly for this — for many older anglers, a GPS motor is what keeps them fishing comfortably rather than giving it up. And does your boat suit one — a solid bow mount, room for the batteries, and a budget that includes them?

TIP

There is no shame in buying a simpler, cheaper motor if your fishing is casual. The GPS features are wonderful, but they only earn their keep if you will actually use them. Be honest about how you fish.

22 A Day on the Water, and a Few Common Questions

A list of features is one thing and using them is another. Picture an ordinary morning on an inland lake. You idle out from the ramp, and once you are near the water you want to fish, you lower the motor and go to work.

1. Deploy the motor with the foot pedal or the button, and let it settle into the water.
2. Steer with the remote or foot pedal toward the spot you want to work.
3. When your fish finder shows a promising piece of structure, press Spot-Lock once.

4. The motor now holds you right there, nudging itself against the wind while you fish with both hands free.
5. When you are ready to move, release Spot-Lock and steer to the next spot, or tell it to follow the shoreline.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Spot-Lock holds a small circle, not a single pin. The boat will wander in a ring a few feet across as the motor corrects, rather than freezing perfectly still. That is plenty tight for fishing a brush pile or a dock, and it is the normal behavior of every brand, not a fault with yours.

Do I still need an anchor?

For most fishing, Spot-Lock replaces the anchor nicely. But keep a real anchor aboard anyway — for very strong wind, for a dead battery, or simply as sensible backup. Electronics can fail; a good anchor never runs out of charge.

Will it work if I lose cell signal?

Yes. These motors use GPS satellites, not your phone's cell service, so Spot-Lock and autopilot work out on the water even where your phone has no bars. The phone app uses a direct connection to the motor, not the internet.

Are they hard to install?

A bow mount, wiring to the batteries, and pairing the remote is within reach of a handy person, but it must be done safely and correctly, especially the wiring. Battery wiring carries real current and deserves respect. If the wiring, fusing, or connections are at all beyond your comfort, that is a job to hand to someone who does it properly rather than guess at.

23 When to Skip the DIY and Just Call

Most of this you can handle yourself. Some days you would rather hand it off, and that is exactly what I am here for. I have more than 30 years of professional experience with this kind of hands-on tech work.

- Cannot decide which motor and how much thrust: I sit down with you, look at your boat and how you fish, and help you land on the right size before you spend a dime.
- Bought one and cannot pair the remote or app: I get the remote paired, the app connected, and any software update installed so every feature works.
- The batteries and charger have you nervous: I make sure the setup is safe and sensible so you are not guessing at the ramp.

> **TIP**
>
> Whether it is choosing a motor, pairing the gear, or sorting the batteries, I am glad to help at your kitchen table or in your garage.

A first visit is a flat ninety-nine dollars, and for the parts that do not need me on-site I can often help on a forty-nine-dollar remote screen-share. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or email bill@billshometech.com. If I am on a job, my booking assistant Sophie can get you scheduled. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Clip this to the fridge. It is the quick answer to the trolling-motor questions that come up most.

Task	What to do
Hold a spot	Spot-Lock holds your boat on a GPS spot with no anchor (Garmin calls it Anchor Lock)
Steer while you fish	Autopilot holds a set heading or line; pick the map-line mode in wind
Fish a shoreline again	Record a path once, then have the motor retrace it
Size the thrust	About two pounds per hundred pounds of loaded boat — more for wind
Count the batteries	Twelve volt is one, twenty-four is two, thirty-six is three
Size the shaft	Long enough that the prop stays underwater in waves; size up if unsure
Choose a battery	Deep-cycle only; lithium is lighter and longer-lived, lead-acid is cheaper
Fish Ohio water	A freshwater motor is right for inland lakes and Lake Erie
Keep a backup	Carry a real anchor too, for dead batteries or heavy wind
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

WORDS TO KNOW

Plain-English Word List

Spot-Lock — A feature that uses GPS to hold your boat on one spot automatically, like an anchor with no rope. Garmin calls its version Anchor Lock.

Thrust — The motor's pulling power, measured in pounds. More thrust moves a heavier boat and holds it better in wind; it is not the same as speed.

Autopilot — A mode that steers the boat on a set heading or line by itself, so you can fish instead of steering.

Deep-cycle battery — A battery built to be drained slowly and recharged many times, unlike a car battery. Trolling motors need these.

Transducer — The small part, often built into the motor, that sends and receives sound to see fish and bottom underwater for your fish finder.

Shaft length — How long the tube is between the motor head and the propeller. It must be long enough to keep the prop underwater in waves.

Brushless motor — A newer motor with no carbon brushes to wear out; runs quieter, lasts longer, and makes less electrical noise, at a higher price.

Automatic stow and deploy — A feature that raises and lowers the motor at a button press, so you never lift the heavy shaft by hand.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

Call or text (330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.