

## Survey Ranks Boating Among Top Stress-Busters

by NewsUSA

If you are seeking to get away from the daily grind, then let your hair down and get on a boat. According to a 2005 survey conducted by the National Marine Manufacturers Association, boating ranks among the top three stress-relieving activities, along with road trips and exercise.

Half of respondents who enjoy or have been boating said the best thing about boating is that it lets them spend time in nature and the outdoors, while 25 percent said it offers an escape from daily life.

The NMMA reports that nearly 70 million Americans participated in boating in 2004, an estimated increase of 300,000 from 2003. What's more, the number of boats on the nation's waterways grew to nearly 18 million in 2004, ranging from canoes and kayaks to cruisers and large yachts.

The survey of 1,061 American households found that the most popular boat-related activity is relaxing with family and friends, followed by fishing, cruising and waterskiing.

"When you step onto a boat, you leave the world of what you have to do and enter a world of what you want to do," said Steve Tadd, director of Discover Boating programs at the NMMA. "We know that 90 percent of Americans live less than an hour from a navigable body of water, making the boating lifestyle accessible no matter what part of the country you live in."

Ready to relax on a boat? Tadd offers four simple steps to finding a boat that's right for you.

1. Think about what you want to do with your boat. Whether it's fishing, water sports or cruising, there's a boat that will meet your needs. Narrow down your choice to one or two specific categories.

2. Go to a boat show. Meet and chat with boat dealers at the show to learn more about the choices and models available.

3. Find local dealers who sell the brands you've chosen. Visit the boat dealer and ask for a test ride. Select the dealer who goes the extra mile and who makes it clear that the dealership will be with you after the sale, too. If you are undecided between two models or brands, buy the boat from the dealer who gives you a sense of confidence.

4. Take a boater education course before using your boat. Have family members take the course, too; everyone will have more fun if they are confident in their abilities to navigate the waters.

For more information, log on to [www.DiscoverBoating.com](http://www.DiscoverBoating.com).

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