

Un-Grounded

Hitch component storage is simple, secure and out of the way with the easy-to-install Hitchport system

A minor annoyance of owning a travel trailer is what to do with the weight-distributing (WD) hitch components when they are not in use. Especially at a campground, these bulky pieces can take up a bunch of your prized storage space, not to mention beating the heck out of the storage compartment and door. In many cases the hitch hardware ends up on the ground under the trailer, ripe for theft, or as a shin breaker, if left attached to the tow vehicle. Then there's the issue of hauling the hitch bars around without getting messy grease all over your hands and clothing.

Enter Gary Bussell. Bussell's Hitchport storage mounts and Hitchgrip handle are among those inventions that make you ponder, "Why didn't I think of that?" Bussell, a retired RV technician, decided to tackle the problem of WD-hitch storage, and the result is a well-engineered solution. For full disclosure, there are other solutions on the market and even homemade fixes that do the job, but they tend to be clunky, taking up a lot of space on the A-frame, and are not very secure.

The Hitchport system is made up of two primary products, the Hitch Bar Storage Mount (MSRP: \$14.99), designed for up to 2-inch ball mounts, and



The Hitchport system secures WD hitch equipment neatly off the ground and out of the way.

1) Each Hitchport kit comes with a laser-cut stainless-steel mounting bracket, screws and instructions. **2)** The brackets can be mounted above or below the A-frame, depending on space and preference. If mounted above, the bracket is attached inside the frame. If mounted below, it's positioned on the outside. Use a combination square or folding rule to mark the measurement.

DIFFICULTY 1 2 3 4 5

TIME TO COMPLETE 20 MINUTES

TOOLS NEEDED POWER DRILL/DRIVER, DRILL AND NUT DRIVER BITS, PENCIL, COMBINATION SQUARE/FOLDING RULE, HAMMER, CENTER PUNCH, NICKEL ANTI-SEIZE LUBRICANT



Adjustable Locking Cable (\$14.98).

Hitchport storage-mount brackets can be installed above the box frame, on the inner surface, or below it, attached to the outer surface. The kits include a simple chart to show where to drill the

the Spring Bar Storage Mount (\$15.69) for square, round and trunnion-style spring bars. Additional Hitchport products include the previously mentioned Hitchgrip lifting handle (\$27.94), which works remarkably well, and a Hitch Ball Cover (\$15.89). The cover didn't fit the ball mount on our Blue Ox SwayPro, but it should fit most of the popular WD hitches. Hitchport also markets the DeadBolt HitchLock 5/8-inch locking hitch pin (\$16.89) and the Master Lock Python



« **HITCHHOLDERS** The Hitchport system consists of the Hitch Bar Storage Mount, the Spring Bar Storage Mount, the Hitchgrip lifting handle, the Hitch Ball Cover and the optional Master Lock Python Adjustable Locking Cable.

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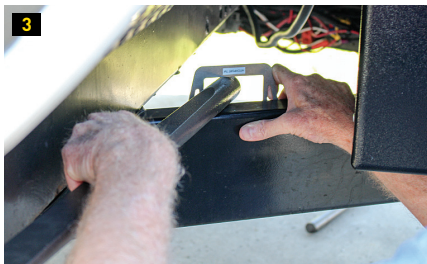
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HANDS ON



3) Hold the ball mount and spring bars in different spots on the A-frame to make sure you will have room to slide them through the brackets before attaching them, and that the installed spring bars won't hit and bend the brackets when towing. **4)** Hold the bracket to the frame and mark the location for the screws. **5)** It is best to use a hammer and center punch for each location before drilling into the frame. **6)** After the locations are punched, drill the holes.

screw holes. As a shortcut for technicians, the brackets have openings that, when properly aligned, make drilling the two screw holes quite simple.

Made from 11-gauge, 304-grade stainless steel on a laser-cutting CNC machine, the Hitch Bar Storage Mount is strong enough to hold any 2-inch ball mount. Simply remove the locking hitch pin on your tow vehicle, pick up the ball mount and slide it out of the receiver using the Hitchgrip handle, then walk it over to the trailer and slide it into the Hitchport. Replace the hitch pin, and the ball mount is now locked to the trailer. Only one bracket is needed, as the weight of the ball mount and the leverage of the head shank against the trailer

frame underside keep it in place.

The Spring Bar Storage Mount is made from the same laser-cut stainless steel and is similarly simple and effective. The provided instructions detail the best way to measure and install the bracket, based on the size and style of the spring bars. The bracket should hold any type of bars, and if yours have chains attached, which most do, you can use the optional Python lock to secure them to the trailer's A-frame by wrapping the 6-foot cable around the frame. Or you can do as Bussell suggests and drill a hole in the front crossmember wing and lock the chains to that.

The Hitchport system is well designed and durable. We'd love to see

7) Before attaching the screws, apply nickel anti-seize lubricant to prevent the screws from corroding into the steel.

8) Screw the bracket to the frame. **9)** Picking up the ball mount with the Hitchgrip is easy and clean, and the hitch bar is balanced nicely to slide into the bracket. **10)** The ball mount can then be secured to the trailer using a locking hitch pin.





11) The spring bars slide through the bracket and can be locked to the frame using the optional Master Python Adjustable Cable Lock or **12)** a long-haspadlock. How they are inserted into the bracket depends on the spring-bar type. **13)** The spring bars can also be locked to the crossmember by drilling a hole in the wing and threading the cable through the hole.

a 2½-inch version of the ball mount bracket for Class 5 bars, but the more popular 2-inch and smaller 1.5-inch bars are well handled. The Hitchgrip handle is designed to fit 2⅞-inch trailer balls. 🚚

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