Installation Guide

Premium Trolling Motor Mount — Through-Bolt Installation

TIME	SKILL	MOUNTING
60–90 min install + 24 hr sealant cure	Comfortable with a drill and basic hand tools	Through-bolt preferred (deck screws as last resort)

What's in this guide

■ SAFETY FIRST

Always wear safety glasses when drilling. Use a dust mask for fiberglass — the dust is an irritant. Disconnect the trolling motor's battery and any other electrical sources before working anywhere near the deck. Verify nothing (fuel lines, wiring, structural stringers) is behind your drill bit before you commit to a hole.

Tools & materials

Tools you need

- [ ] Cordless drill
- [ ] Drill bits — see Step 2 for sizes
- [ ] 82°/90° countersink bit (or step bit)
- [ ] Painter's tape (any width)
- [ ] Pencil or fine-tip permanent marker
- [ ] Small bubble level
- [ ] Sharp utility knife or scissors
- [ ] Caulk gun (for 10 oz tubes) — or just squeeze the 3 oz tube by hand
- [ ] Allen key set (5 mm for M8 socket bolts)
- [ ] Ratchet + 13 mm socket (for M8 nyloc nut)
- [ ] Shop vac or rag to clear drill swarf
- [ ] Cardboard scrap for the test fit (~18" × 9")
- [ ] Phillips driver (for trolling motor puck)

Hardware & sealant (not included)

- 6× M8 × 1.25 flat-head countersunk machine screws, DIN 7991, 316 stainless. Length depends on deck thickness — 40/55/65 mm covers 1"/1.5"/2" decks.
- 6× M8 fender washers, 316 SS, large diameter (~30 mm OD or bigger) — see backing washer note.
- 6× M8 nyloc nuts, DIN 985, 316 stainless.
- 1× 3M 5200 Fast Cure (white) — PN 05220, 3 oz tube. Marine-grade polyurethane sealant.
- 1× small bottle of medium-strength threadlocker (Loctite 243 blue or equivalent).
- 6× 1/4-20 stainless bolts for puck mount — use the hardware that came with your trolling motor.

✓ WHY 316 STAINLESS, NOT 304
316 (A4) contains 2–3% molybdenum that resists pitting and crevice corrosion from chloride exposure. 304 (A2) looks identical but fails in saltwater over time — surface staining first, then deeper pitting, then catastrophic failure of the bolt body where you can't see it. On a fastener that's holding 80 lb of trolling-motor leverage above your deck — don't compromise. If a bolt is even slightly magnetic, it's not 316 (316 is fully non-magnetic).

■ ON BACKING WASHERS
Standard washers concentrate the bolt's clamping force on a tiny area of the deck underside and can pull through fiberglass or thin aluminum. Use LARGE-diameter fender washers (~30 mm OD or bigger) — or, for heavy-duty installs, a 50 × 50 mm × 3 mm 316 stainless backing plate blank with a 9 mm hole, so the load is spread across a much larger underside footprint.

Step 1 — Plan and test fit

1.1 Print the drill template

- Download the drill template PDF from the product page (port or starboard — pick the side matching your install).
- Print at 100% scale — disable "Fit to page" or "Shrink to fit" in your print dialog.
- Measure the 1" reference square AND the 6" ruler on the printed template. Both MUST measure exact. If either is off, your printer is scaling — fix the print dialog and reprint.
- Tape the two printed pages together at the seam crosshairs.

1.2 Trace it onto cardboard

- Glue or tape the printed template flat onto a piece of cardboard at least 18" × 9".
- Cut around the plate outline with a sharp utility knife or scissors.
- Punch holes in the cardboard at each "DRILL" crosshair (a small finishing nail works).

1.3 Test-fit on the deck

- Take the cardboard template to your boat. Place it on the deck where you want the trolling motor.
- Confirm: nothing underneath the deck will hit your drill (fuel tank, fuel lines, wiring harness, foam-filled stringers).
- Confirm: enough clearance below the deck for a wrench on the nyloc nut — usually 2–3 inches of underside access.
- Confirm: the plate doesn't hit the gunwale, hatch covers, or rod holders when the trolling motor is deployed and stowed.
- Mark each hole position through the cardboard with painter's tape + a marker.
- Lift the cardboard, double-check your marks, level the proposed plate position, and commit.

> **■ WHY CARDBOARD FIRST**
> The plate itself is ~4 lb of aluminum and the drill template prints flat. Cardboard lets you move it around, hold it against the gunwale, swing your trolling motor through its arc, etc., without scratching anything. 10 minutes here saves an irreversible "wrong spot" later.

Step 2 — Drill, seal, and install

2.1 Drill the holes

- Apply painter's tape over each marked hole position — this prevents fiberglass splintering and gives you a clear surface to mark on.
- Start with a small pilot bit (1/8" / 3 mm) at each location, drilling slowly. Pilot through the deck completely.
- Step up to the final clearance bit — 11/32" (8.5 mm) gives M8 bolts a clean slip fit through the deck.
- Vacuum out all swarf and dust. Remove the tape.

2.2 Seal every hole

- Apply a generous bead of 3M 5200 Fast Cure all the way around the perimeter of each drilled hole on the deck's TOP surface.
- Inject some 5200 INTO each hole as well — coat the inside walls of the hole. This is critical: it seals the deck core (foam, balsa, plywood) from water that could otherwise wick in and rot it.
- If your deck has a balsa or plywood core, this seal is what makes the difference between a 30-year deck and a 3-year wet-rot problem.

2.3 Bolt the plate down (through-bolt — PREFERRED)

- Place the plate over the wet 5200 beads, aligning the 6 large countersunk holes with the holes you drilled.
- Drop one M8 × (your length) bolt through each countersunk hole. The flat head should sit flush in the plate's countersink.
- From under the deck: thread on a large fender washer (or backing plate), then a drop of Loctite 243 on the bolt threads, then the M8 nyloc nut.
- Hand-tighten all 6 bolts first, then go around and torque each to 15–18 N·m (133–160 in·lb). Don't over-torque — you can crush the deck core.
- Once all 6 are torqued, run a continuous bead of 5200 around the entire perimeter of the plate, both top AND bottom side. Smooth with a wet finger or a plastic spreader. This is the watertight seal between plate and deck.

■ DECK SCREWS — LAST RESORT ONLY

If you absolutely cannot get a wrench underneath one or more of the bolt locations (closed compartment, foam-injected hull, etc.), you can use a 316 stainless self-tapping deck screw into the bare deck. This is significantly weaker than a through-bolt — the holding force depends on the deck material gripping the threads. Use only where through-bolt is impossible, use a screw thick enough to bottom out near the bottom of your deck core, and still apply 5200 inside and around the hole. THROUGH-BOLT IS THE CORRECT METHOD.

Step 3 — Mount puck, cure, and inspect

3.1 Mount the trolling motor puck

- Use the 1/4-20 hardware that came with your trolling motor — NOT new fasteners. Manufacturers spec a specific grade and length for their puck.
- Apply a small drop of Loctite 243 (blue, medium-strength) to each 1/4-20 bolt before threading it into the plate. This prevents the puck from working loose under trolling motor vibration over the season.
- Hand-tighten each bolt first, then snug with the appropriate driver. Don't crank — 1/4-20 strips easily.
- The plate's threaded holes work for both 4-bolt and 6-bolt puck patterns (Minn Kota, MotorGuide, and most major brands).

3.2 Cure time

- Wait 24 hours before moving the boat or putting any load on the plate. 5200 Fast Cure reaches full strength at 24 hr.
- Don't trailer or launch during the cure period. Don't hose down the deck. Keep the boat under a cover if rain is forecast.
- If you used standard 3M 5200 (not Fast Cure) — wait 7 days. The hold is identical when fully cured; the only difference is speed.

3.3 Annual inspection (every spring at launch)

- Check each of the 6 deck bolts for tightness — snug, not over-torqued. If any spin freely, the nyloc has failed; replace it.
- Inspect the 5200 perimeter bead for cracks, lifting, or discoloration. If any section is failing, peel out the old bead with a sharp blade and apply fresh 5200.
- Check the 1/4-20 puck bolts for tightness. Re-Loctite + retighten if any are loose.
- Look for any sign of staining or pitting on the stainless hardware — if you see rust, the bolt is not 316 and should be replaced before it fails.

Questions?

We answer every question, usually within one business day.

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