

Backing into a Campsite – Step-by-Step

This process document corresponds to the YouTube video: [Backing into a Campsite – Step-by-Step](#). Please watch this video for visual understanding of the process. If you are getting started, some of the items shown are available on our [Amazon storefront](#). If this process is of value, we appreciate you starting your shopping from our store. You can also support our efforts by using the THANKS button under the YouTube video.

Backing into campsites takes time to master. While it may take time, there is a process to follow to help speed you along the learning curve. Here is the six-part process:

1. Site Survey
2. Starting Position
3. Cut-Back Turn
4. Unwind & Follow
5. Pull Forward
6. Push Back to Marks

Part 1 – The Site Survey

1. Pull up and park in front of the campsite to survey the site. At some campgrounds with wider loop roads, you can pull slightly off the road and park. This is a bit more difficult if stopping means you are blocking a busy campground loop road. The reason to do a site survey is so you can note any obstacles, unevenness and where utilities are. The goal is to come up with where you want the RV to end up on the campsite. Especially be aware of campsite utility poles and any other none-moveable obstacles. Also, be aware of space you may need to accommodate your RV's slide.
2. Next, place a marker (cone) at the front corner of the campsite to have a reference point for your first turn.
3. Next, using [cones](#)^{*}, mark where you want the back corners of the RV to be on the site. If you are on a full hook-up site, remember to keep in mind the placement of the sewer outlet on your RV. Use two orange cones, colored wheel chocks or colored levelers to mark both back corners of where you would like the RV to rest on the site.

Part 2 – The Starting Position

4. Pull the tow vehicle and RV past the campsite drive entrance enough to where the back corner of the RV is parallel to the cone at the front corner of the campsite drive entrance. This will allow you to begin your back in with plenty of room to execute your first back-in turn.

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Part 3 – The Cut-Back Turn

5. Turn your tow vehicle steering wheel in the opposite direction to where you want the back of the trailer to go. This is counter-intuitive and takes a bit of getting used to. If I turn my steering wheel to the left while going backwards, the back of the tow vehicle and front of the trailer will move in the same direction, pivoting the back of the trailer in the opposite direction. This is because the tow vehicle is attached to the trailer at a single point at the trailer's tongue. The force in one direction on the tongue will pivot the back of the trailer in the opposite direction.
6. Next, move the tow vehicle very slowly back as the back of the trailer moves toward the campsite. As a tip, you will likely need to use the opposite mirror from the way you are turning your steering wheel. I sometimes stop and adjust my mirrors to make sure I can properly see the back of my trailer.

Part 4 – The Unwind and Follow

7. Once you are moving the back of the trailer in the right direction pivoting around the front campsite cone, you will need to unwind your turn which will move the front of the tow vehicle toward the opposite side of the road. This is where you can get into trouble if you are not careful, especially given a narrow campground loop road with trees, shrubs, or vehicles near the road across from your site.

When you unwind the first turn, what happens is the trailer begins to move in the opposite direction from the first back-in turn. This is usually needed in most situations. However, the front of your tow vehicle will turn toward the far side of the loop road quickly when doing so. If there are serious obstacle near the road, there is a real risk of hitting them with the front of the tow vehicle.

8. Next, once you allow the first back-in turn to unwind, you will be straightening up the trailer on the campsite pad. Many times, at this point in the process, I find that I have either overshoot or undershot where I wanted to be on the campsite pad. If you are fortunate and there is considerable length to the campsite pad, you can back up a way on the pad before you pull forward to straighten things out.

Part 5 – The Pull Forward

9. Pull forward as much as possible straight out of the campsite. If there is an open space directly across the road, pull the tow vehicle forward in the site giving yourself plenty of room to back in straight.

On some occasions, mainly due to obstacles across the loop road, you may have to pull out completely and go around the loop road again for a do-over. I have had to do these many times, so it is nothing to be ashamed of, especially on a very difficult back-in.

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Part 6 – The Push Back to Marks

10. Once the RV and tow vehicle are pulled out straight, back in again using your colored cones as guides. Try to get the back corners of the RV aligned with the cone marks. Since you have already mapped out where you need to end up, you shouldn't have issues with slide outs having room, the reach of your electrical cord, water hose, or sewer connection.

Backing into a campsite with a travel trailer requires plenty of experience before most people get comfortable with it. Some campsites are very difficult to back into and the goal is to become more confident with experience and to avoid risks to people and property when executing a back-in. So be patient with yourself as you improve your skills and grow in confidence.

That should do it! Remember that if you are new to RVing, we have many resources to help you get started, including our New to RVing group. Just visit johnmarucci.com for more information.

*As an Amazon Associate, I earn from qualifying purchases.