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**BOATING RANKS AMONG TOP STRESS-RELIEVING ACTIVITIES**  
*More Americans Discover Boating With Helpful Buying Tips*

CHICAGO (2005) — Americans seeking to escape the daily grind are finding the escape route closer to home and more affordable than originally thought. Boating ranks among the top three stress-relieving activities, according to a 2005 survey conducted by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA).

“We know that 90 percent of Americans live less than an hour from a navigable body of water, making the boating lifestyle accessible to most people across the country,” says Amy Murray, director of Discover Boating programs for the NMMA. “More people are finding being out on the water aboard a boat is ideal for stress-relief and relaxation while building long-lasting memories with loved ones.”

In fact, the NMMA survey of more than 1,000 American households found that the most popular boating-related activity is relaxing with family and friends (40 percent), followed by fishing (33 percent), cruising (14 percent) and waterskiing (8 percent).

Half of respondents that have been boating enjoy the time boating lets them spend in nature and the outdoors, while 25 percent said it offers an escape from daily life. In addition to boating, the survey found other top stress relievers include weekend road trips and exercise.

“When you step onto a boat, you leave the world of deadlines and obligations behind and enter a world of personal time for relaxation,” notes Murray. “There are ways to escape daily stressors on land, but there’s something about the boating lifestyle that more people are discovering as the ultimate escape.”

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

Today, boats are designed for every taste, lifestyle and budget. Many consumers are surprised to learn that they can own a new boat for monthly payments of less than \$200. In 2004, the average price of a new outboard boat, motor and trailer package was approximately \$24,079, while one of the most popular entry-level boat, motor and trailer packages fell into the \$10,000 range.

With a variety of boats to choose from, Murray offers four simple steps to finding a boat that's best suits the buyer:

- **Determine What, Where and Who.** Think about what you want to do with your boat – whether fishing, water sports or cruising, there's a boat that will make it happen. Narrow choices to a specific category or two. Visit [DiscoverBoating.com](http://DiscoverBoating.com) to find a glossary of boat types.
- **Do Your Homework.** Visit a boat show, stroll around a marina and go boating with friends to learn about the choices and models that will meet your needs. Talk to boat dealers, friends and fellow boaters to answer any remaining questions.
- **Find the Ideal Boat/Dealer Combination.** Identify local dealers that sell the brands that peak your interest. Similar to car dealers, ask boat dealers for a test ride before purchase. Select the dealer that goes the extra mile and makes it clear that the dealership will be with you after the sale. If undecided between two models or brands, buy the boat from the dealer that gives you the greatest sense of confidence.
- **Hone Your Skills.** Take a boater education course with your family and complete the course before your boat is launched. Everyone will have more fun if they are confident in their abilities to be "smart boaters."

For more information on boating, visit [DiscoverBoating.com](http://DiscoverBoating.com).

### **About Discover Boating**

Organized by the boating industry's National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Discover Boating is a consumer awareness program designed to educate the public on the boating lifestyle while providing helpful tools and information for getting people out on the water to enjoy boating. NMMA is the leading trade association, representing more than 1,500 companies that produce boats, engines, trailers and accessories used by the nation's nearly 70 million recreational boaters. NMMA members provide approximately 80 percent of the marine products used by recreational boaters and anglers in the United States, where retail sales of boats and related products and services amount to an estimated \$33 billion annually.

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