Centerboard Trunk Maintenance/Repair
By Rey Garza

If you have never removed the centerboard trunk on your boat and checked the insides, I highly recommend you do as soon as possible. One of the most important things that you will want to check for is the condition of the nuts that hold the mainsheet block on. There is a lot of stress on the mainsheet block. In many cases these nuts have rotted away. More than one sailor has lost the use of the mainsheet block while underway – not a great experience

Tools and Supplies

Tools	Supplies
Cold chisel	3M 4200
Small punch	Self adhesive foam strip, 3/4" wise, 5/16 thick
Hammer	1/2" plywood strips 1 " wide
Drill and bits	Stainless steel bolts, nuts, washers
Wrenches	3/16 aluminum rivets
Rivet gun	

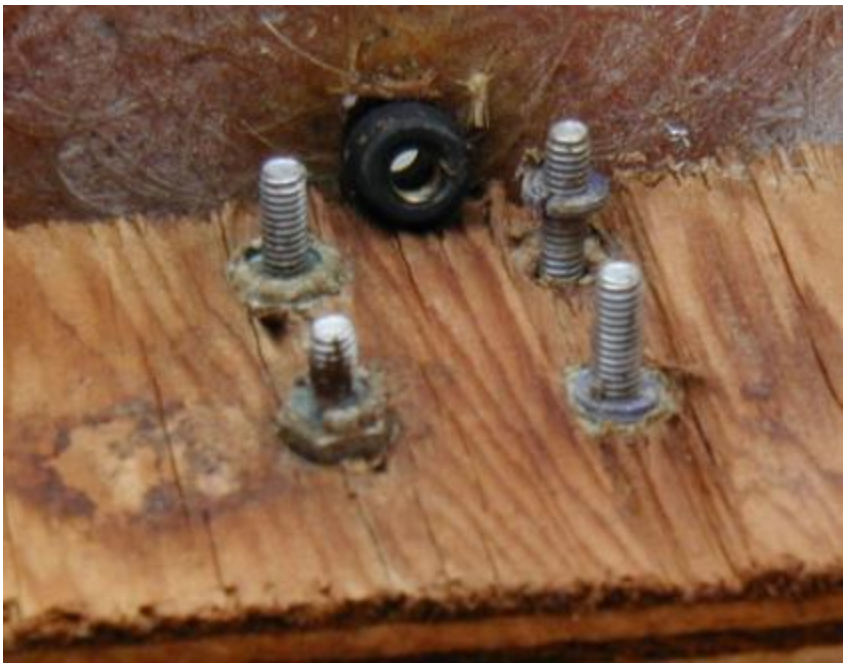
The first step in this job is the removal of the trunk cover. My boat had a couple of pieces of wood, one on each side, that were rotted and useless. The screws that hold these pieces of wood on anchor into wood under the trunk cover.

Remove these screws and the wood that it holds on. Next remove the rivets that attach the Cover to the trunk. Some people use a drill with a 1/8 inch bit to drill the rivets out. I prefer the cold chisel method. With this method you need a good, sharp cold chisel. Insert the blade just underneath the head of the rivet. Make sure that the chisel is flat against the trunk, then tap the head of the chisel with a hammer. This will slice the head off of the rivet. Once I have sliced the heads off, I go back with a punch and tap the rest of the rivet through the hole. Make sure to remove all of the rivets. That should be all that you need to do, but some boats have other devices that might be in the way of removal. Mine has jib haulers that the screws went into the wood on the trunk. Once everything is out of the way the cover should lift right off.

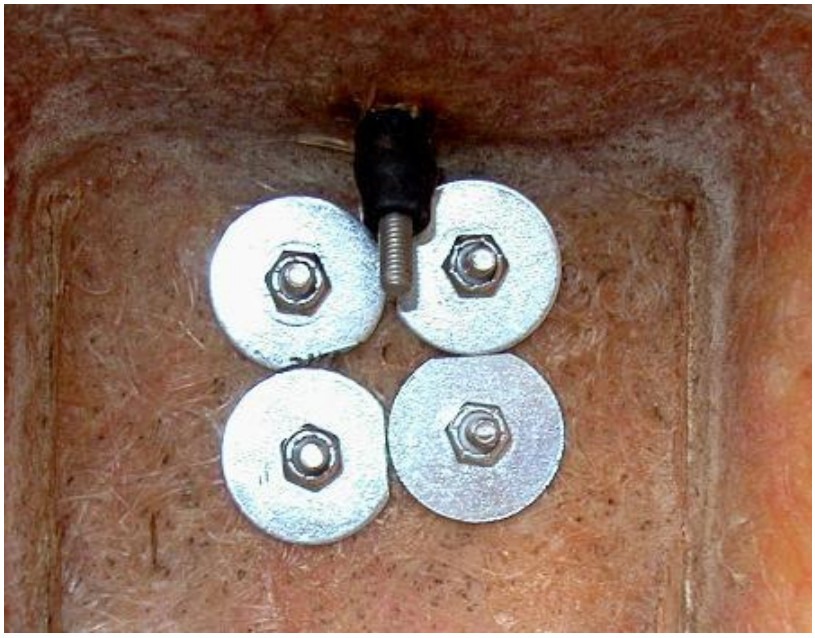
The picture right is what the trunk looked like when I removed the cover. The trunk itself is made of fiberglass, but there are strips of wood that are used for strength, and as an anchor for screws. There is also a strip of foam on top of the wood that serves as a gasket. As you can see on mine the wood had rotted and the foam was dried up and falling apart.

Once the cover was removed, I cleaned off all of the old rotted wood. I replaced it with one inch wide strips of half inch plywood. I used 3M 4200 to secure the plywood strips to the trunk.

Next, I placed a foam strip on top of the wood strips. The material I used was 3/4 inch wide, self adhesive foam that was about 5/16 inch thick.



Now for the important stuff. This is a picture of the mainsheet block nuts inside of the trunk cover. (The trunk cover is actually laying upside down in the picture, that's why the bolts are pointing up.) As you can see two of the nuts have corroded away, leaving only the nylon locking portion of the unit. The other two are almost completely corroded as well.



This is a picture of the new bolts and nuts with fender washers. All are made from stainless steel. I decided to eliminate the piece of wood that was being used as a backing plate and went with fender washers. The reason being I replaced the wood on the outside of the cover with a piece of composite decking material. I think that gives me all of the strength that I need to hold the mainsheet block in place. You may replace the wood with wood or polyethelene cutting board material. Simply measure and cut a section from a cutting board which are available in many department and home improvement stores.

Here is the cover riveted back into place with a piece of composite decking material. I cut in a slit wide enough to accommodate the centerboard. I chose the decking material, because it should last forever with no maintenance. It is a bit heavier than wood, but it shouldn't be a problem.