10 Ways To Repurpose A Lawn Mower Engine

Have you ever noticed that the body of your lawnmower wears out long before the engine?

If so, then you may even have a few extra engines laying around, but have no idea what to do with them.

There are several ways to reuse a lawn mower engine to meet a range of off gridding and survival goals. Whether you use an engine that was sitting in your garage for years on end, or you happen to find one abandoned by someone that saw no use for it, there is a chance you can use it for any of the following purposes.

Here's how!

Build a Generator

From surviving the aftermath of a hurricane to trying to cut back on your electric bill, you would be amazed at how much electricity you can get from a lawn mower engine.

This smart device will help you slash an excess of 70% off your power bill overnight…

Depending on the horsepower of the engine, you could power household lights, and perhaps a few smaller, low drain appliances. For example, if you have RV or other 12 volt appliances on hand, you should be able to run them with ease.

Unless you convert the lawn mower engine to run on some other fuel, you will need gasoline. Fortunately, you will need far less than what you would need if you were running a conventional generator.

Even if you do not get as much power from the lawn mower engine, it will still get you through though times as long as you pair it with energy conserving appliances.

Power Transport Vehicles

Let's say an EMP blast has wiped out most computers, and most cars and other vehicles that rely on computer are unable to run. If you have a lawn mower engine that doesn't have any computerized or electronic parts, you can use it to power smaller vehicles.

Here are just a few options you may want to consider:

- Bicycles – the lightweight frames and large wheels make it possible for even a small lawnmower engine to power the bike at a fairly good speed. For the sake of balance, you may want to add training wheels on the back wheel of the bike. Don't forget to make sure that you can still use the brakes and turn the bike easily while the engine is running. You can also power tricycles using a lawnmower engine.
- Motor bikes – even though motor bikes and scooters may not move as fast, they will still get you from one place to another.
- ATVs, Go Carts, and Other Small Vehicles – You can power just about any light weight vehicle suitable for carrying one person with a lawn mower engine. This includes designing your own vehicles that will incorporate elements that you feel will be most important during a major crisis. This may even include a small side cart where you can put supplies, larger tires, or even tracks for navigating off road and in rough terrain. You may also want to include other design elements that will help you navigate in the snow or ice if you will be traveling in areas where these forms of precipitation will lead to problems. Just remember not

to exceed the weight bearing capacity of the engine you are using to power the vehicle.

Power a Wheelchair

Even outside of a crisis situation, many people that need wheelchairs cannot afford motorized versions.

While these people may be able to get around a small room using a manual wheelchair, the lack of a motorized transport device makes it impossible for them to go the park or enjoy other activities in places where a motorized wheelchair may not be available.

In order to use a lawn mower engine to power a wheelchair, you would need to start off by building a suitable frame. Depending on the person, you can build a recumbent design, or something that looks more like a conventional motor driven wheelchair.

Regardless of the design you choose, a motorized wheelchair driven by a lawn mower engine is not suitable for use indoors or other areas with poor ventilation. As with any other gasoline driven engine, a running lawn mower engine still gives off carbon monoxide and other toxic gasses.

Build a Power Wheelbarrow

More than a few people interested in gardening these days live on very small pieces of land, or have medical conditions that make it very hard to tend a conventional garden. If you have a small deck or porch, a power wheelbarrow can be of immense benefit in setting up a container garden.

Among other things, you can fill it up with soil or compost and bring it to the site where you intend to plant. As long as the wheelbarrow has suitable wheels, it will be able to travel from one area to another with relative ease.

When powering wheelbarrow with a lawnmower engine, it will more than likely have to run on at least three wheels. If you include longer handles for leverage, keep the single wheel in the front. This will enable you to use the wheelbarrow as a manual design as well as a motorized one.

If you plan on bringing soil and compost indoors to grow plants in a single room, it will still be best to have the lawn mower engine turned off.

During the process of building a power wheelbarrow, you'll still need some way to steer the device even though you will not be sitting in it.

Your best option is likely to be an Arduino controller that has a remote controller on it. For the most part, once you know how to use Arduino to control a remote control car model, you can adapt the same methods for controlling a power wheelbarrow.

Power an Air Compressor

If you have ever worked with hand tools, then you were sure to be amazed at the ease and convenience associated with power tools. While you may need to go back to hand saws and other simple devices in a time of need, chances are you still love jig saws, circular saws, drills, and rotary tools.

As wonderful as these tools may be, many people that have used compressed air tools tend to think of conventional power tools as nice, but primitive. If you are serious about repairing cars or working materials that require a lot of force to manage, you are likely to want to use compressed air tools.

One of the most disappointing things is an air compressor connected to a tiny tank that won’t give you compressed air or time to get much of anything done. The most useful air compressors with big tanks or the capacity to deliver air without going to a tank can be expensive and bulky, so it makes sense to make an air compressor from an old lawn mower engine.

As with generating electricity, you will find that just about anything that spins can be combined with other parts and materials to compress air.

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Power a Small Boat

It becomes clear that transport over land may not be the only cause for concern during a crisis.

Small conventional boats can be powered by lawn mower engines. It will will take some extra fitting to ensure the lawn mower engine doesn't get wet, however it is well worth the effort, especially if you have to travel a significant distance in order to get to some kind of safety. The boat will have to be fairly small for this to work, and consider keeping it at home in a garage or some other area where you can get to it easily if needed.

Aside from conventional boats, consider adapting a lawnmower engine to run an air boat. If you take a careful look, in particular, at the pictures from Texas, you will find these boats are very important and useful when there is a lot of flooding combined with the potential for excessive amounts of underwater debris.

As with navigating through swamps or marshes, an airboat may be a much better choice if you are in a city or other suburban area and need to get out through flooded streets.

Build a Rotary Tool

Even though most people use hand held rotary tools without a stand, it is also possible to use them while suspended to a platform. Since a lawnmower engine can deliver plenty of power to spin a central shaft, it can be used to take the place of many different kinds of rotary tools. This includes:

- Drill presses, screwdrivers, and power drills. Even though you cannot simply lift the lawn mower engine by hand for the smaller hand drilling devices, you can

still use an extension that will deliver the spinning motion to a tool that you hold in your hand. For example, Dremel, Foredom, and other rotary tool manufacturers all make flexible shafts that fit onto the main rotary appliance while it it is mounted on a platform.

- Polishers – you can use rotary tools to polish everything from metal and stone to wood. You will still need the proper grits and pastes to create smooth, even polishing effects.
- Stone or Metal cutting and embossing – if you are interested in creating stone or metal art, it always helps to have a rotary device that can cut through these materials. In addition, you can also adapt rotary tools to polish and sharpen knives or other metal equipment that you buy or make yourself.

Depending on how you line up the equipment extending from the shaft, you may also be able to make a very crude wood and metal working lathe. Just be aware of the fact that the platform for this kind of application can be very tedious to design and will need to withstand a good bit of vibration without moving. You will also need proper tools for forming the items being spun by the lathe.

Power for Water Irrigation and Transport

If you own a homestead, you may have ponds or streams on the land that can be used for irrigation. If you have to get the water to move uphill or around complex land features, you'll need pumps or other devices to ensure adequate water movement.

Combine a lawnmower engine with an Archimedes Screw or other devices in order transport water during times when the flow is too slow for your needs. This may also include pumping water up from shallow wells or other underground resources.

Even though it is true that there is no place for water to go during a major flood scenario, there are just as many other times when you can direct the water away from your home and property and have a reasonable expectation that it won't just come right back. Therefore, converting a lawn mower engine to be used as a sump pump or other water draining device also makes a good bit of sense.

Many people going off grid often find themselves wondering how they can capture rainwater and deliver it inside their homes as efficiently as possible. If you need a low budget option, try using a lawn mower engine converted for pumping water so that you can move water from the rain trap through pipes to a tank inside your home.

Depending on where the tank's lowest point is in relation to the other pipes, you can still get a reasonable amount of water pressure for household needs, or you may still need to add extra smaller sized water pumps around the house.

Power Heavy Lifting and Towing Equipment

As a budget conscious prepper, you might think that you will only have simple devices such as rope hoists and levers to move heavy equipment around.

On the other side of the equation, the spinning shaft of a lawn mower can be used to power hoists and pulley systems. Just convert the motion of the lawn mower shaft so that it wraps the rope around a reel, then you'll have to work out a method to release the rope once the weight is removed from it.

Unless you feel like creating some type of transmission, it will be very difficult to create a "reverse" motion with the lawnmower engine.

You may be surprised at the number of times you will need to haul something big and heavy from one place to another. For example, if you are clearing trees or need to move bulky logs, you could create a cart and then attach a pulley system to it.

From there, you can attach the lawn mower engine to the cart, and then use the pulley system to drag the object from one place to another. As with any other moving device, you must also be able to stop the cart from moving forward, and you must also be able to lock the wheels in place for stationary use.

Learn the Fundamentals of Engine Cleaning and Repair

Today, more than a few people are interested in retrofitting cars or putting older ones back on the road. But as these vehicles become scarcer, you may be forced to try and refurbish a vehicle that has serious engine problems.

A lawn mower engine has the same kind of piston and cylinder system as a conventional gas engine, so you can take it apart and learn the basics on a much smaller device. As you go through this process, learn and practice good disassembly and assembly practices as well as learn how to clean and evaluate parts.

You won't be spending thousands of dollars on a vehicle, and

then find out that you do not have the skills necessary to rebuild the engine. While there will still be a learning curve in transiting from lawn mower engines to old style automobile gasoline engines, it will not be as steep or complicated.

Over the years, many people have thrown out perfectly good lawn mower engines because they saw no other use for them. But lawn mower engines are small, durable, and reliable. With just a little bit of adaption, they can be used to meet a range of homesteading and survival needs.

No matter whether you start adapting lawn mower engines to other uses as a matter of hobby or necessity, you are sure to learn a lot, and enjoy a lower budget useful task at the same time.

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