

Answering 12 FAQs About Ball Mounts and Hitches



You might be transporting materials at a construction site or traveling with your boat to the lake or ocean. Whatever the case, you won't get far with your **trailer** unless you have a hitch or ball mount. For those new to towing, there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to trailer hitches; rather, there are various types compatible with different vehicles and loads. Alongside your hitch, you need a ball mount for secure towing.

When it comes to transporting large items or materials during Life Out Here, Tractor Supply knows how much you'll rely on your new hauling setup. To help you figure out what you need for your vehicle, we're answering 12 of the most frequently asked questions we get about **trailer hitches and ball mounts**.

1. How Does a Trailer Hitch Work?

Trailer hitches connect the trailer to the vehicle and feature a receiver tube that attaches to the back of the car or truck. Depending on the item in tow, you might choose one type of trailer hitch over the other. **Ball mounts** feature two components – the shank which inserts into the receiver tube and a platform for the hitch ball, which secures the trailer to the vehicle for reliable towing. Some trailer hitches will include a platform for ball mounts and **hitch balls**.

Although both are two necessary parts of the overall towing system, trailer hitches and ball mounts serve distinct roles. The hitch creates a bridge between the vehicle and the trailer, whereas the ball mount supports the weight of the item in tow.

2. What Are the Types of Ball Mounts?

Trailer hitch ball mounts can be either fixed or adjustable, with fixed models held at a specific height and adjustable versions to accommodate trailers of different heights. Compare this with trailer hitches, which generally have fixed positions, regardless of type. Adjustable ball mounts might seem like the obvious choice, but you might find fixed ball mounts the more economical option if you're working with a tight budget.

You don't always need to use ball mounts to connect trailers to vehicles, as some prefer **drawbars** because you can adjust them according to multiple towing needs with **adapters and extenders**. You might have just purchased a trailer and aren't sure where to begin with hitches, ball mounts and all the other **towing parts** you're learning about. In that case, **towing starter kits** offer the tools you need to make sense of hitch installation.

3. What Are 5th Wheel Hitches?

As it sounds, **5th wheel hitches** are intended to haul heavy-duty loads in 5th wheel trailers. You connect them to the bed of your pickup truck for exceptional strength, stability and weight distribution when towing **livestock trailers, RVs and campers**, among other large vehicles.

4. What Are Bumper Hitches?

A versatile choice, **bumper hitches** attach directly to the backs of many types of cars and trucks. If you're only towing a small **cargo carrier, utility trailer** or similar light load, a bumper hitch might be your best option.

5. What Are Front Mount Receiver Hitches?

Unlike other types that connect at the vehicle's rear, **front mount receiver hitches** attach to the front frame and can tow **snow plows, bicycle carriers** and similar small loads, although they can't handle trailers. You might use front receiver hitches for additional items that won't fit in a travel trailer when hitting the road for vacation.

6. What Are Gooseneck Hitches?

As with 5th wheel hitches, **gooseneck hitches** get their name from the gooseneck trailers they attach to and also mount to truck beds. However, they feature the ball and coupler system of bumper hitches rather than a kingpin lock. Use these hitches for heavy-duty needs, such as hauling large equipment or flatbeds.

7. What Are Pintle Hitches?

Pintle hitches forgo the ball and coupler system and instead use a hook that attaches to a pin on the front of the item in tow. You might use this style of hitch if you want to allow for extra movement when navigating rough or bumpy terrain. Without some give, it might be difficult to traverse such environments with a trailer. Pintle hitches are commonly used for **farming** and construction tasks.

8. What Are Rear Mount Receiver Hitches?

Compatible with any type of vehicle, **rear mount receiver hitches** feature square tube-shaped receivers that connect to the car or truck's frame and can tow anything from a small cargo carrier to a **fishing boat**. With rear receiver hitches, you connect a square, tube-shaped receiver to the car or truck's frame.

Since these hitches tow such a wide range of trailers, they're categorized into different classes based on their weight rating, so you can find the hitch that matches your needs. These classes range from I to V, and a higher class corresponds with a higher weight rating.

9. What Are RV Hitches?

You would use RV hitches when towing travel trailers or similar vehicles, which require a hitch capable of handling such a weight capacity. Typically, you can go no lower than a Class III hitch when towing an RV.

10. What Are Weight Distribution Hitches?

Used alongside receiver hitches, **weight distribution hitches** support better stability and handling, plus even tire wear. These hitches feature bars that connect from the front of the trailer to the hitch, which help take weight off the rear of the trailer and spread it out on the front and rear axles. The result is smoother towing with less sway. Whenever weight distribution is a concern, such as lugging heavy loads, consider these hitches.

11. How do I Choose the Right Hitches and Ball Mounts?

It comes down to a simple question – what do you plan to tow? Make sure you know before you choose a trailer hitch, as the many options mean some types are better suited for your applications than others.

For example, if you're hauling a heavy-duty load, 5th wheel, pintle and gooseneck hitches are up to the task. For added towing of light objects such as bikes and small cargo carriers, front mount receiver and bumper hitches are sufficient. You may also consider the weight ratings of hitches to understand their carrying capacity, as some can handle 40,000 pounds or more and others only 5000 pounds or less.

12. Which Trailer Hitch Accessories Do I Need?

No matter which type of hitch you use, you'll likely need some **trailer hitch accessories** to ensure a safe and secure ride to your destination, even if it's just across the farm. If tampering is a concern, **trailer hitch locks** and **hitch pins** or clips ensure the hitch stays attached to the ball mount. You can add more length to the receiver tube to get extra clearance on the road with **trailer hitch extensions** and use **hitch covers** to safeguard receivers when your vehicle and trailer are parked.

Think about your own safety, too – **hitch steps** make it easier to get into and out of truck beds when unloading a haul. Some accessories are only compatible with certain hitches such as **gooseneck** or **5th wheel** parts, so make sure you choose the correct items for your hitch.

Prepare for Towing Any Type of Trailer with Tractor Supply

You're accustomed to Life Out Here and frequently travel with a trailer in tow, so you know how important hitches and ball mounts are for a trip that brings peace of mind. For recreational, agricultural, commercial and other applications, trust the wide range of **trailer and towing supplies** in our inventory. Visit your **local Tractor Supply store** today or shop our selection online.