

Continued from Page 4

right side of the snowmobile's handlebar. Use your thumb to control the throttle, which negotiates the amount of speed desired.

Similarly, on the left, you will generally find the brake lever on the handlebar. It does not take much pressure to pull the brake lever in order to slow down your snowmobile.

For rides on softer and less compact snow trails, releasing pressure from the throttle will slow your snowmobile quickly. On more compact and smoother snow

trails, however, you will need to apply pressure to the brake lever to achieve a stop. On ice, as you would in a vehicle, pumping the brakes by applying and releasing pressure on the brake lever will result in a smoother and typically safer stop on a snowmobile.

Now that you have found the throttle and the brake (the two most important parts of any vehicle), you are ready to begin moving. To do this, apply pressure to the throttle.

Apply ample pressure to slightly rev the snowmobiles engine until it begins to move. As you move forward, turn the han-

dlebars into the direction you want to travel.

When making a sharper and faster turn, it is best to lean into the turn. For instance, if you are making a sharp right turn, lean your body to the right without removing your feet from the stirrups. The stirrups help to stabilize your body while helping to prevent the rider from slipping off of the machine.

For beginners, ride your snowmobile on the trails that have been packed and already traveled until you get the feel for snowmobiling. Veering off into unpacked snow might get you stuck or even cause an

accident with another snowmobiler.

Following these basic steps is essential for first-time and inexperienced snowmobilers to successfully practice this fun winter sport. As always, safety is the first issue to be addressed before operating any machinery.

But above the safety precautions, knowing how to turn and lean into a turn is important for operating any snowmobile safely. Once learned, it will most likely be a winter pastime that will be enjoyed for many frigid seasons to come.

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Tips for Safe Snowmobiling

Winter is quickly approaching, and thousands of people worldwide are excited about the upcoming opportunity to go snowmobiling. If you have never tried this exciting winter sport, perhaps this is the year that you will.

As with all sports associated with the cold and snowy season, there are certain risks involved in snowmobiling. But if you take the time to learn how to do it and are content to gradually master it, you will find that it is one of the more enjoyable activities that take place during this season.

Riding a snowmobile is no different than riding a motorcycle – except, of course, you have skis instead of wheels.

You may think that snow would be softer than asphalt should you fall off, but the packed trail and ice can leave you with bruises. Make sure that you wear your helmet and always secure the strap under your chin for a snug fit.

The helmet shouldn't be so loose that you can wiggle it on your head, but it shouldn't be so tight that it is uncomfortable.

Next, sit down on the sled. The best way to figure out how far from the handlebars you should be is to close your eyes and raise your hands. Bring them down slowly; if they fall naturally onto the grips, then you have the proper distance. You should be comfortable enough that you are neither over-reaching nor feeling cramped.

Next, place your feet under the stirrups located on the lower front section of the vehicle. Having your feet in this secured position will allow you better control on the turns and help to keep you on the sled. Now go ahead and turn that engine on!

After you have properly positioned yourself on the machine, find the throttle. It will be on the right side of the handlebar. You will be able to control the speed of the

snowmobile by using the thumb on your right hand. Of course, just as you want to go, you'll eventually want to stop. You will be able to achieve this by using the brake lever, located on the left side of the handlebar.

It is helpful to know that stopping on hard-packed, more solid snow is more difficult than lighter, softer snow. Just as you do while driving a car on ice, gently pump your brakes. Be sure to give the motor a good amount of gas to get moving. From that point on, control the snowmobile in much the same way that you would command a bicycle.

Use your handlebars to move left and right, keeping in mind that the ease with which you turn is based primarily on the speed at which you are traveling. Turns are always easier when moving at a higher speed. Remember to al-

ways lean to the inside of a turn, as this will help the sled stay on both skis.

There is a saying among bikers: "There are those who have fallen and those who are just waiting to take a fall." In other words, everyone at some point takes a spill, and this also applies to snowmobilers. Keep in mind that falling off will happen sooner or later. You shouldn't preoccupy yourself with the event of this happening; you simply want to be prepared in the event that it does.

Keep your eyes open (and of course, alcohol and any motorized vehicle do not mix!) and watch out for other snowmobilers. Maintain a distance of at least 150 feet between you and other riders. If you follow these steps, you should have an enjoyable experience this winter.

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Getting an ATV: 15 Things to Check Before You Buy

Are you in the market for an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)? An ATV can provide you with years of fun outdoors, but if you don't know what to look for, you're in for a giant headache. This ATV buyer's guide will provide you with 15 things to check before you buy. Whether you're a seasoned expert or just getting started, the following will be beneficial to you.

When it comes to shopping for an ATV, there are a ton of things you should keep in mind so you can get the best possible machine for your dollar. Here is a list of 15 things to look for when shopping for an ATV or quad.

1. Take it for a ride. It is an ALL terrain vehicle, right? So, you should pretty much be able to take it for a test drive just about anywhere. If the seller has a problem with you taking it out for a spin, there's probably something wrong with it.

2. Check the head lights, tail lights, engine shut off switch, and key switch. All should be in perfect working order.

3. Check the hand, foot, and parking brakes. Do they operate smoothly or stick? Be sure to check for damaged or cracked cables.

4. Move the handlebars back and forth. This will help you identify worn tie rod ends.

5. Remove the seat and take the air box lid off. A clean air box and filter is a good sign – if there's water in it, the engine could be damaged.

6. Check for worn out tires or tires full of plugs. If they are worn or plugged a lot, it's not necessarily a problem, but it could get you a discount on the price.

7. Check the exhaust to make sure

“When it comes to shopping for an ATV, there are a ton of things you should keep in mind so you can get the best possible machine for your dollar.”

Continued on Page 6

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How to pick the right ATV mud tires

Many reasons can come to mind as to why you have or want an ATV. There are many all terrain vehicle owners who simply want to have a recreational off-road vehicle for adventurous weekends with their friends. There are also those who are interested in a work horse vehicle to move around a big farm or ranch, hauling loads and moving snow.

The Other Breed

Then there is the other breed of owner: competitors. ATV riders have several kinds of races they can participate in. This begs the question: when do you need to go out and get those ATV mud tires? There is a vast assortment of ATV tire types. Each individual kind satisfies the requirement of both the terrain and the rider.

Determining the Tire for You

If you intend to utilize your ATV on similar terrain for the majority of the time and there is not much climate change in the area of use, it is possible for you to continue the use of your stock ATV tires.

Nevertheless, if you intend to use your all terrain vehicle on various other types of terrains – hilly terrain as well as flat terrain – and in various types of climates, you can benefit from the numerous kinds of tires that are available so your ATV will be more flexible to meet your needs.

Why ATV Mud Tires?

Locating the proper type of tires for your all terrain vehicle can increase both the safety and comfort of your riding experience. What is the best way to determine when you need to purchase ATV mud tires?

Well, you will certainly require them if you intend to use your ATV in the mud. Figuring out what ATV mud tires to buy

also means determining the right kind of tread you need.

Learning About ATV Mud Tires

ATV mud tires typically have deeper treads that are constructed to hold and adhere to the ground surface. If you are thinking of traveling along a hard, flat type of surface, the treads of ATV mud tires will usually be more of a hindrance.

When looking to purchase brand new tires for your all terrain vehicle, be certain that you get the width down right for your particular rims. If the tires are too wide for the rims, they will fly off at some point.

ATV Mud Tire Options

“If you intend to utilize your ATV on similar terrain for the majority of the time and there is not much climate change in the area of use, it is possible for you to continue the use of your stock ATV tires. Nevertheless, if you intend to use your all terrain vehicle on various other types of terrains – hilly terrain as well as flat terrain – and in various types of climates, you can benefit from the numerous kinds of tires that are available so your ATV will be more flexible to meet your needs.”

You have the option of picking anything from a flat type of tire to a round one. If the tire you are looking at is a round one, it has the ability to cause the ATV to roll when you are in hard cornering.

You also have the option to pick between a short type of tire and a tall one. You will have to evaluate your personal driving style and the terrain you plan to drive on to determine this choice.

You will get a softer type of ride, as well as additional ground clearance with a taller tire. You will get additional stability for hard cornering and driving at higher speeds with a shorter tire.

Final Considerations

Lastly comes the determination in regards to the tread itself. If you're looking to stay with a single set of tires, pick a tread that has been designed primarily for general conditions.

If you wish to drive in numerous, very different kinds of terrains, and if you have the money to indulge, then an assortment of tires may be your choice. Available types of tires include trail tires, sand tires, and, of course, ATV mud tires.

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Continued from Page 5

that the spark arrestor is still there. Almost every state and national forest requires that you have one. If it has been removed, make sure they replace it before you buy.

8. Check the engine oil to make sure it's clean and at an optimum level. This should give you a quick idea of how well the engine has been maintained by the current or previous owner.

9. Check the gas tank for rust (use a flashlight). Yes, a gas tank can rust, and rust can cause problems for the carburetor.

10. Now, pick up the front of the quad and stand it up on the rear grab bar so you can check the undercarriage for damage.

11. While it's in this position, look at the frame. Make sure it isn't bent, cracked, or rusted.

12. Inspect the CV joint boots (4x4).

If there are any cracks or tears, they could contain water or dirt, and that's costly to repair.

13. If it's possible, remove the front and rear differential inspection plugs (4x4). If the lube looks dirty, the oil is probably contaminated and there could be bearing damage.

14. Look closely at the front or rear sprockets. Each point should be uniform. If they are worn more on one side or have a hooked appearance, a new chain and sprocket set is in order.

15. Try to move each front wheel in and out from top to bottom and side to side to check for worn wheel bearings and ball joints. Do the same for the rear.

As always, the rule is simple: Buyer Beware! If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Good luck!

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