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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.”

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