

Ways to Beef-up Your ATV

With new ATV's coming out every year, a quad that is king of the mountain one year may fall back to the middle of the pack the next year. And, of course, the more you ride and get comfortable with your ATV, the braver you are going to get and eventually reach a point when you have perfected the art of riding and run into a mud pit you can't cross or notice that some other quads can get the jump on you. Many people simply trade their quad when this happens, but there are a lot of things you can do to your quad to get even more power or custom tune your ATV to suit the terrain in your area or your riding style.

One of the easiest ways to tailor your quad to local riding conditions is to simply change your how you grip the ground. There is a large variety of tires on the market that are made for extreme mudding, sand, and all out speed over any terrain. The most obvious factor you can change about your tires is the tread pattern. Mud tires will typically have a deep, well-spaced tread with a lot of surface area, which allows it to push against slippery mud. Although tread pattern comes into play when playing in the mud, so does sidewall strength and tire thickness. A mud tire with a thicker sidewall will give you more consistent performance when you're axle deep in sludge. Many people find that lighter rims also give them a slight edge in the mud. Like mud, getting through sand is made much easier with tread that can push and grab a lot of sand. However, if you're trying to get faster, especially through the corners, you might benefit from a knobby open-patterned tire that is designed to grip trails without deep mud pits. You can also get tires to make the ride a little softer or give you a firmer grip, but the tires only affect how you grip the trail. Sometimes it's necessary add some muscle to your quad to get the performance you're looking for.

Although there were once many people who would change sprockets to get more low-end power or top-end speed out of their quads, most of today's quads have balanced gearing based on weight, engine power, and what it was designed to do. Many riders find that tinkering with sprockets don't change their quad's performance characteristics as much as they'd like, and instead turn to performance modifications to squeeze more power from their ride. Although you can go deep into your engine and change cams and other parts that will make your engine even more stout, you can get noticeable results from more affordable and less complicated modifications.

The easiest way to get more power from your quad is by adjusting the airflow through your engine. Simply changing the intake on your quad will give you an increase in power because you force more oxygen into the combustion chamber. Switching to a less restrictive exhaust will get more power to your wheels since the engine doesn't have to work as hard to breathe. Headers are another bolt-on modification that will let your engine work more efficiently and add power to your quad.

One popular modification that makes it possible to take on really deep mud holes is a snorkel kit and exhaust extension. A risk you run when diving into mud is

that you will suck some mud through your intake, or it will enter your engine through your exhaust. Getting mud or water in your engine will shut it down in a hurry and may require a trip to the shop to get all the water out of your engine. A snorkel kit may be necessary to get through some mud holes you encounter when riding.

Regardless of what kind of quad you ride, with the horde of new ATV's that come out year after year, sooner or later it will fall to the middle of the pack. The good news is that aftermarket parts are also getting better all the time, which allows you to custom tune your quad without breaking the bank.

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