

How to Conquer the Mud with Your ATV

Although certain kinds of ATVs are setup for pushing through deep mud, the technique for getting to the other side remains the same. When crossing obstacles like mud, the biggest risk is getting stuck, which means coming to a stop. Because of this, speed is your friend, although you can hit a mud hole too quickly. However, hitting the mud with speed will usually give you the momentum to slide over the mud hole and out the other side even if your tires won't grip much. In some cases, you may want to keep at least one tire on solid terrain, if possible, so that your quad has something it can grip. You can do this by straddling the ruts and staying on the high ground, or by leaving one tire out of the mud. However, if the mud hole is too deep, you may tip your ATV over into the mud.

Some say that you should stand on your pegs when entering a mud pit so that you are more ready to respond to the uneven terrain. However, keep in mind that you may meet a lot of resistance when you hit the mud, causing you to come to a near-stop very abruptly. If you are standing when this happens, you might go for a dive in the mud. Although standing up may work for some people, you need to be comfortable and balanced enough to be prepared to unseen rocks and roots in the mud, as well as the possibility of a nose dive, or suddenly catching traction with the throttle wide open.

One mistake that many new riders make is giving their ATV too much gas once they start to lose traction. Once the mud starts to fly, more gas is not always the solution, since flying mud means that your tires aren't gripping anything solid. Sometimes a tire that is spinning a little slower will grab onto something that it would just grind against with more throttle. This is especially true if you come to a complete stop in the mud. When getting your quad moving again, easy does it, since too much gas means nothing but slinging mud. However, to get out of most spots after coming to a stop, some wheel spin is necessary, but more wheel speed usually doesn't mean more traction.

When you get into the mud, keep in mind that the tires with the most weight over them will be the most likely to get traction. So, if your quad is two wheel drive, you will want to keep some of your weight over the back axle, which will drive those rear tires through the slippery mud on the surface and down to something it can grab. Shifting your weight side to side can also help one of your tires get the traction it needs to pull you out of the mud.

Four wheel drive makes short work of a lot of mud that gives two wheel drive quads a lot of trouble, but four wheel drive is by no means an end-all solution for deep mud. Some mud pits may be entirely too deep for a stock setup, and a

snorkel kit and exhaust extension may be needed just to ensure that your engine doesn't suck in a bunch of mud and debris. For mud this extreme, four wheel drive is a necessity, and a set of aftermarket tires with a more aggressive pattern will also help pull you out of the mud.

No matter what kind of ATV you take through the mud, keep in mind that you may only have one shot at getting through without getting a tow. The more you know about the particular mud hole, the better, but an experienced rider can tell a lot about a mud pit by its looks and how soft the rest of the trail is. However, a hole you can get through one day may swallow your quad after a good rain or may change drastically after other people have ridden through. The key to conquering mud is keeping cool and having several ways to get your tires to grip instead of slip.

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Word count 694