

Tips for Taking Jumps and Sharp Turns on Your ATV

You may notice that some ATV riders can make certain obstacles and jumps look like child's play while others make them look dangerous and impassable. Although superior equipment may be partially responsible, experience and familiarity with your quad is what separates the men from the boys. Riding time is the best way to get better, but there are a few techniques, like making you quad pivot around a corner or taking a jump, that can make riding a lot more fun.

If you want to take a corner quickly without losing much speed, depending on your ATV's setup and capabilities, you may be able to conquer the turn by making your quad pivot around it. Although this technique works best with light, powerful sport quads, it can be used with utility ATV's as well. Enter the corner wide and fast instead of slowing down or coasting through. When you get to a point in the corner that you hit a spot where you can turn your quad in the direction you want to go, turn your wheels in that direction, hit the front brake hard, and open the throttle. When done properly, this will momentarily cause your rear tires to lose traction and spin your back end around. When you have turned your quad far enough, simply release the brake and keep on the gas. You may fishtail as you finish this maneuver, but steering into the skid will keep you going where you want to go. The result is your quad turning quickly around an obstacle without losing much speed. Making your back wheels lose traction and spin you sideways is the key to this maneuver, so you may get better results if you lean forward and take some weight off the back wheels. This technique is easier accomplished on quads with stiff suspension, low center of gravity, and lots of power on demand. The lack of these characteristics will make this maneuver more dangerous and difficult to do properly, but it can be done if your front brakes can slow you down and you can get your back wheels to break loose.

The key to doing jumps on an ATV is technique and respect for your ride. When done properly, most jumps are relatively safe, but if you bite off more than you can chew, you will get hurt. With this said, easy does it when it comes to learning to get your wheels off the ground. No two jumps are exactly the same, but there is a simple technique for getting air without kissing the handlebars when you land. The length and steepness of the jump will play a large role in how fast you want to be going when you hit a jump, but be conservative on the first couple passes and that will tell you what kind of jump you're dealing with. Sometimes a jump will have a lip on it that will do unexpected things to your quad, so be prepared. On your first pass, you will want to approach the end of your ramp(whatever it may be) with enough speed that you feel you would get a little bit of lift if you just held the throttle steady all the way through. However, just before you reach the end of the ramp, let off the gas momentarily, but then quickly give it as much gas as possible. This accomplishes two things: first, the burst of power right before you leave the ground launches you into the air; second, it causes your front end to shoot up into the air, much like doing a wheelie. By entering a jump with this posture, your back tires should hit the ground first, ensuring that you and your quad

don't do a swan dive into the ground. When you are airborne, let off of the throttle so that your quad doesn't over rev while the wheels can spin freely. After your first successful pass, you will know a lot about that particular ramp and what your ATV is likely to do when you jump it. Using this information, you can get an idea of the best speed to hit the ramp at and how much throttle to give it before you leave the ground. For many ramps, especially those that are short and have a sharp angle (like the edges of dried out ponds), first gear may be plenty of speed and power, and if the ramp is too steep, trying your approach in second gear could be painful.

Anytime you ride an ATV you should exercise caution, especially when riding in a new area or trying new techniques. Modern ATVs are extremely powerful and can get out of control quickly if you do not respect their power. When trying any new techniques, take it easy and master it at low speeds. Although something may look simple, every quad handles differently and will react to obstacles and maneuvers differently. Trying to do things that are beyond your skills or your ATV's handling capabilities can be disastrous and keep you from riding again for a very long time.

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