

## Prepare your machine for action

The last thing you want is to be injured or stranded when you're out on your ATV. Inspecting the mechanical condition of your machine before you set out will help make your ride enjoyable and your machine dependable. Off-road riding can cause wear and tear on your machine. This makes regular maintenance essential.

There are many types of ATVs, so consult your owner's manual for a list of the equipment that needs to be checked on your particular machine.

Remember that it is always important to follow the recommendations in your ATV manual. As a general guide, here are some of the most common items that you should inspect before setting out on an ATV excursion.

**Air cleaner:** Check for dirt and clean or replace if necessary. A clogged air cleaner reduces the efficiency of your ATV's engine.

**Air pressure of tires:** Check that your tires are all inflated to proper pressure. Make sure those on the left side are inflated to the same pressure as those on the right side. If one side is higher than the other, your vehicle may pull to one side. Under-inflated tires may cause wheel damage on bumpy terrain, while over-inflation can damage the tires. Either way, it may be harder to steer your ATV.

**Brakes:** These are crucial to your riding and must be kept in tip-top condition. Check that they operate smoothly and have been adjusted according to instructions in your owner's manual.

**Chain or driveshaft:** If your ATV is equipped with a chain, it should be checked for wear, proper adjustment and adequate lubrication on a regular basis. If, on the other hand, your machine has a driveshaft, it should be checked for oil leaks.

**Coolant level:** Check this before every ride. Your machine may have overheated on your last ride.

**Footshifter:** This must be firmly attached for safe riding. Positioning is also important. Your footshifter should not be so low that your toes are pointed downward at the ground. And it should not be so high as to make shifting awkward.

**Lights and switches:** Check that they are working properly by switching them on and off during your warm-up. A working brake light is especially important when riding in a group.

**Nuts and Bolts:** Your ATV's parts can become loosened when you're out on rough terrain. Before you set out on the trails, take a look for loose parts. This should be done with the engine off. Give the handlebars, footrests, etc. a good shake before each ride and tighten fasteners where necessary.

**Oil and Fuel:** You don't want to get stranded because you are out of oil or fuel. Always start out with a full tank of fuel and make sure your oil level is adequate.

**Safety Tether/Kill Switch:** Always test your ATV's kill switch to make sure it is in working order.

**Sparkplugs:** Always carry replacement sparkplugs and make sure you have an exact replacement. Any deviation could harm other components.

**Steering:** Check that it is smooth and tight. There should be no free play. Controls attached to the steering should be secure with no movement.

**Throttle and cables:** The throttle should move smoothly and snap closed with the handlebars in any position. Check cables and controls to make sure they are in good condition and that they are not covered with dirt and mud. This can restrict full operation.

**Tire condition:** Make sure there are no cuts or gouges that could cause air leakage.

**Wheels:** You can detect worn-out bearings or loose nuts by grasping the tire at the front and rear and rocking your ATV on its axle. There should be no free play or slip as you rock the wheel.

## Tips

Wash your bike after every ride and inspect it for any loose parts. Applying WD40 to pivots, levers and the exhaust pipe will help prevent rust and wear.

Don't forget to carry a tool kit with you to help you deal with any unexpected mechanical problems. In addition to the contents of the tool kit that came with your vehicle, you may want to add a few items: spark plugs, an extra headlight bulb, wire and tape, plus a strong tow rope.