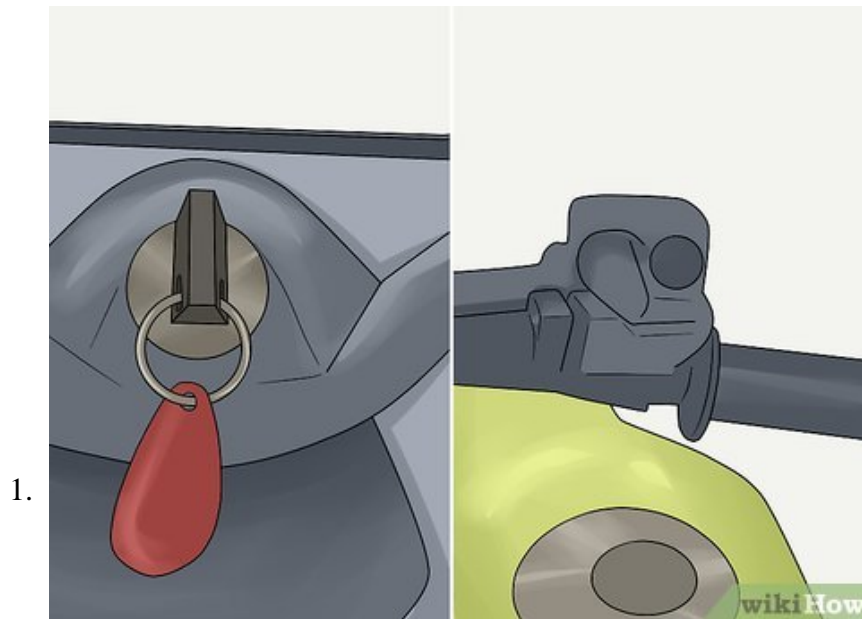


How to Drive an ATV

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), otherwise known as quads, are popular vehicles used on all types of land. While you don't need a license to drive these vehicles, you do need to learn how to operate them safely. Before riding an ATV, you need...

Method 1 of 4:

Familiarizing Yourself with the ATV



Locate the key, on/off switch, and start button. Find the ignition key just below the handles. Examine the handles of your ATV to find the on/off switch and 'start' button, which is located on the rightmost edge of the handle. If you look to the left of the 'start' button, there may be a red button, which is your kill switch.^[1]

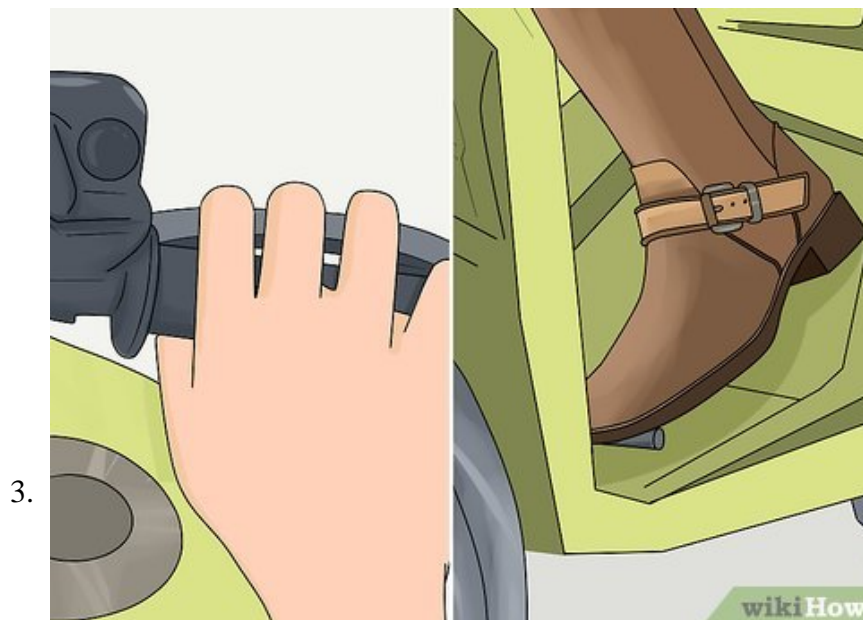
1. If you're having trouble finding these components, double check your user manual.
2. If the kill switch on the left handle is activated, then your engine won't start.^[2]
3. You can usually find the fuel tank in the section of the vehicle that's between your legs.

Did you know? There are 2 different types of ATVs: kickstart and push-button start. Most ATVs use the push-button technology, while older models might require a kickstart.



Locate the throttle on the right handle. Check for a thumb-controlled throttle, which looks like a cylindrical device with a moveable lever attached to it. If you don't have a thumb throttle, look for a handlebar throttle, which looks like a moveable grip attached to the handle. Whenever you ride your ATV, you'll either push on the lever with your thumb or twist your handle with your right hand to accelerate.^[3]

1. Push throttles require you to push on a lever attached to your handle, while handlebar throttles need to be twisted backward. Both types can be found on the right handle.



Search for the brake handle and foot pedal. Find metallic handles that are attached to the left and right sides of your handlebars. Give them a squeeze to make sure they work properly, and that your brakes aren't stuck in any way. Then, look for a foot brake pedal on the right side of the quad.^[4]

1. The front brakes are usually controlled by the handlebars, while the rear brakes are controlled by the foot pedal.^[5]

4.



Access the shift lever on the left-hand side of your vehicle. Look for a small metallic pedal, which you push with your left foot. If your ATV has a clutch, it will be the handle attached to the left handlebar. If you have a vehicle with automatic transmission, you won't need to worry about these mechanisms.^[6]

1. Look for a sticker with a diagram showing the shift pattern on the left side of the ATV by the shift lever.

5.

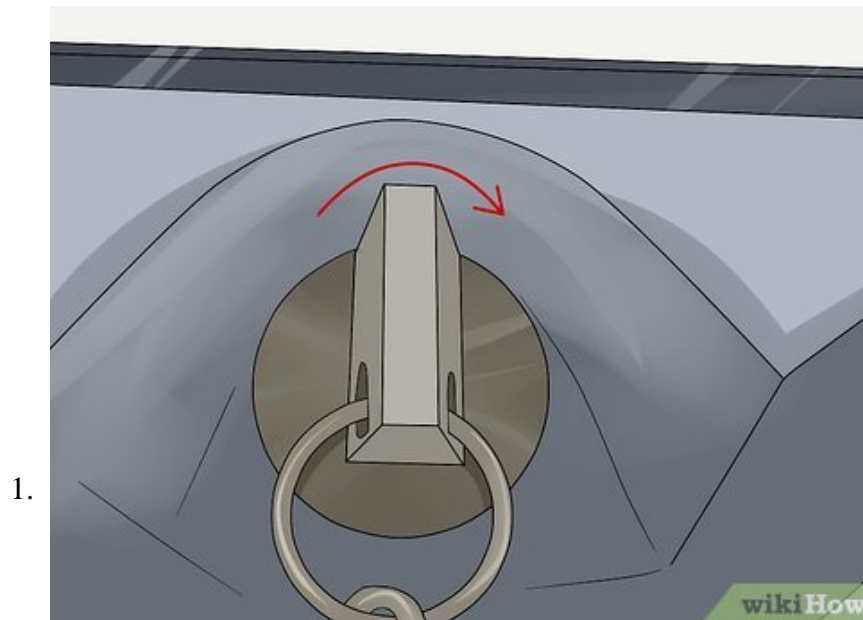


Wear protective gear that guards your head and body. Purchase a helmet that covers your entire head. If the helmet doesn't include eye protection, take a moment to purchase a pair of riding goggles that guard your eyes from any flying dust or debris. Check that you have durable shirts and pants that completely cover your skin, in addition to thick, sturdy boots.^[7]

1. An ATV can reach very fast speeds. Like any vehicle, you want to make sure that your whole body is protected in the event of a crash or tumble.

Method 2 of 4:

Driving and Steering the ATV



Turn the key and switch on the fuel supply valve to power the vehicle. Put the key in the ignition switch and turn it to "on." If you have a fuel valve switch, reach beneath the seat and switch this on.^[8]

1. If the fuel supply valve isn't on, then you won't be able to successfully move your vehicle.
2. Check your user manual if you're having trouble finding your fuel valve.



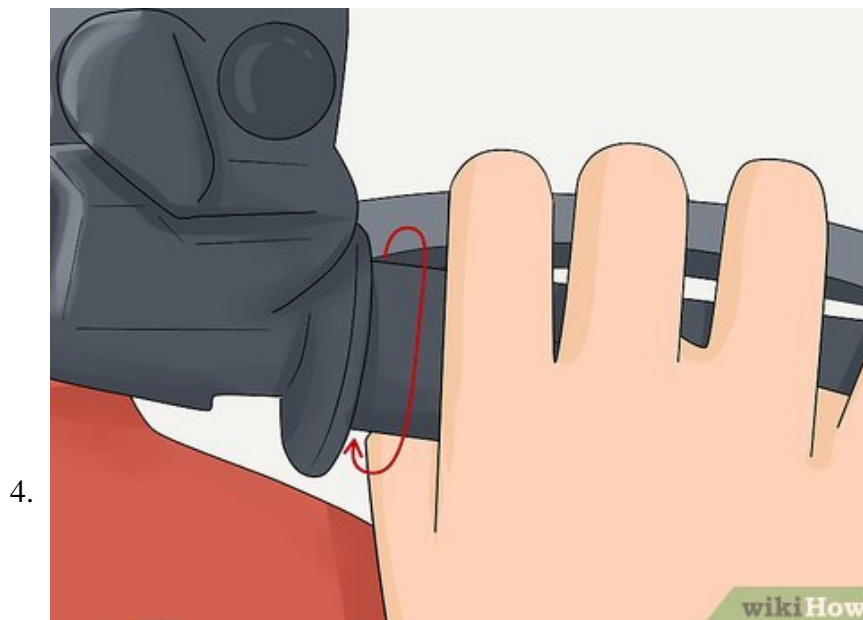
Press the 'start' button to power up your vehicle. Hold down the brake safety switch, which can be found on the right handle on your ATV. While gripping this switch, press the 'start' button on the left handle of your vehicle. Wait 1-3 seconds for the engine to rev, which signifies that the ATV is running.^[9]

1. Double check to make sure that your kill switch is in the off position, and not activated.^[10]



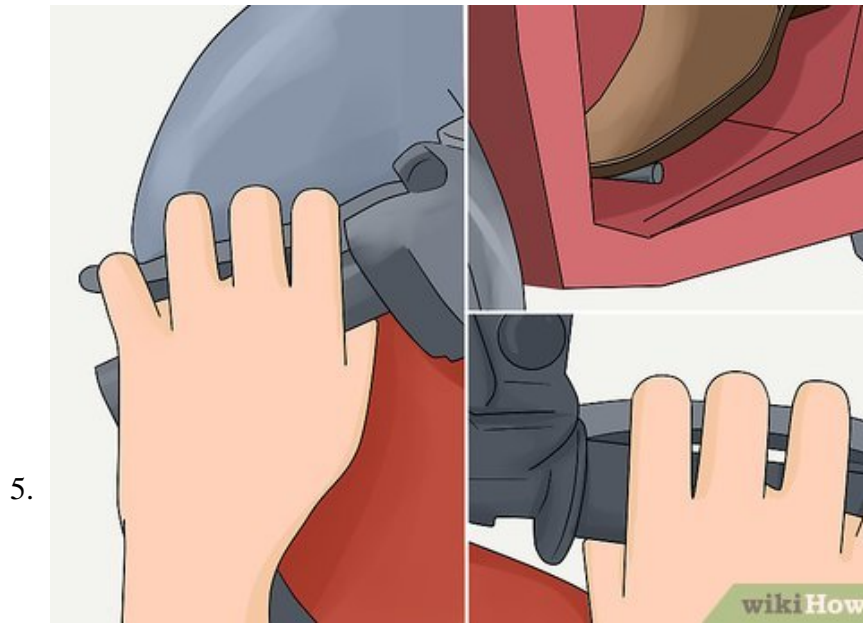
Shift into first gear when you're ready to drive. The ATV should be in neutral when it's off or parked. Disengage the emergency brake if your quad has one. Then, hold the brake handle and pedal down and use your left foot to shift into first gear.^[11]

1. You can find the neutral gear between first and second gear on a manual transmission. It's below first gear on a semi-automatic. If you have an automatic transmission, use the shift lever near the handlebars to put the quad in gear.



Pull on the throttle to move the vehicle. Find the throttle device on the right handlebar and gradually push it forward with your right hand. Use this part to control your acceleration. If you ever feel like you're going too fast, use the brake handles to slow down. If you have a handlebar throttle, slowly twist your right handle backward to get the quad moving.^[12]

1. Imagine that the throttle is your gas pedal while you ride the ATV.
2. Don't use your brakes and throttle at the same time.



Shift gears using the foot lever, clutch, and throttle. Maintain a consistent speed before pulling on your clutch and releasing the throttle. At this time, use your foot to lift the lever into a higher gear setting. Once you've transitioned to a higher gear, and apply gradual pressure to the throttle again while slowly letting go of the clutch.^[13]

1. If you're shifting down a gear, apply the brakes when you press on the clutch. Instead of lifting the foot lever with your toes, push down on it with the sole of your shoe.
2. If you have an automatic or semi-automatic transmission, you don't need to worry about managing the clutch.



Lean left or right when making a turn. Shift your weight in the direction that you're planning to turn your ATV. When going to the left, move your bottom to the left half of the seat while you guide the handlebars. When going to the right, shift your bottom to the right side of the seat.^[14]

1. Always adjust your weight accordingly, so the ATV doesn't flip.

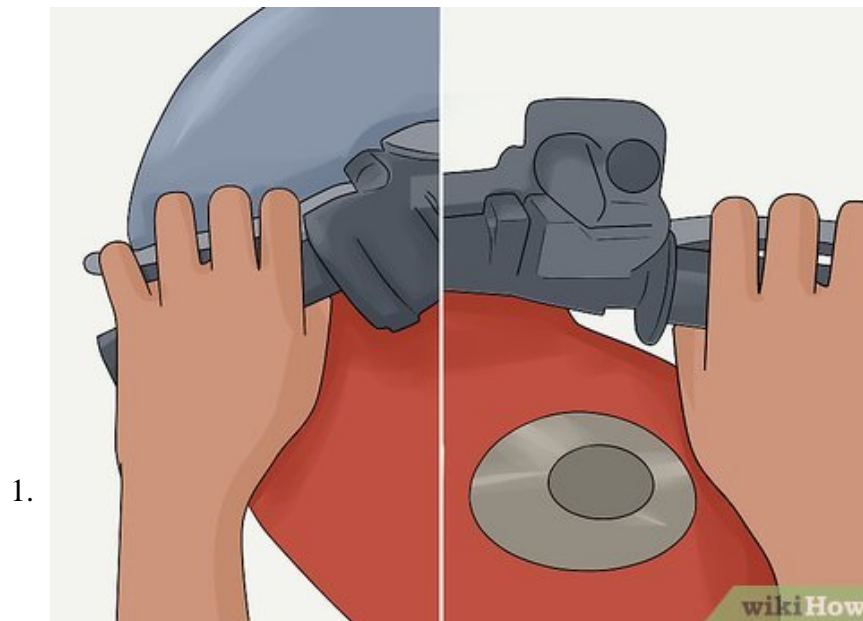


Squeeze the brake controls to slow and halt your vehicle. Grip the brake handles attached to your handlebars and pull on them gradually. Don't apply a lot of force at once, as you don't want your vehicle screeching to a halt. Practice driving at slow speeds, like 5 to 10 miles per hour (8.0 to 16.1 km/h), and applying the brakes slowly.^[15]

1. Don't drive at fast speeds until you've gotten the hang of basic braking and accelerating.

Method 3 of 4:

Maintaining Proper Posture



Clutch the handlebars with both hands. Keep your hands on the handlebars so you can steer properly, guiding your vehicle in a safe, consistent direction. Similar to an automobile, bike, or motorcycle, you can

never tell what obstacles might suddenly appear in your path. Prepare for any situation by holding onto the handlebars carefully, and keeping your eyes on the road.^[16]

1. Even experienced ATV drivers can be taken by surprise. Be prepared for the unexpected so you can steer yourself out of harm's way.



Keep your shoulders relaxed and your elbows out. Don't be tight when you ride an ATV; instead, keep your elbows splayed, mimicking the outward direction of your handlebars. Avoid tensing your shoulders, as this makes it more difficult for you to control the vehicle.^[17]

1. Whenever you ride an ATV, you always want to stay on alert. You won't be able to do that if your body is tense and rigid.
2. Relax your shoulders as though you were riding a bike.

Warning: If you ride an ATV without a helmet, you could be setting yourself up for serious injury.

3.



Point your feet forward on the ATV. Place both feet on opposite sides of the ATV, keeping them secure around the central body. Try not to keep your feet pigeon-toed; instead, keep them parallel to one another, with both feet pointing toward the handlebars. When driving at slower speeds on sturdy terrain, try keeping your butt centered on the seat cushion.^[18]

1. ATVs don't have pedals like bikes. Instead, some vehicles have sturdy ledges that you can rest your feet upon.

4.



Point your knees inward toward the vehicle. Keep yourself anchored in the ATV by pulling both knees toward the center of the vehicle. Imagine that there's a magnet between both of your knees, and that they're both attempting to stick together. Try keeping both knees locked against the vehicle, so you don't fall or jostle out.^[19]

5.



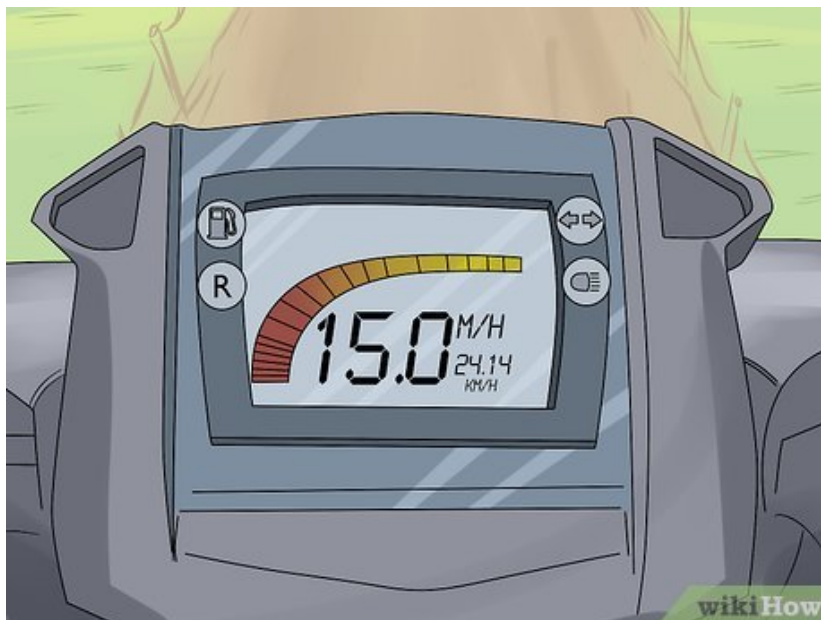
Lift your bottom off of the seat when examining your surroundings. Keep your elbows splayed outwards and your feet facing forward, with your weight shifted in a forward direction. Raise your bottom slightly, using this new vantage point to look for bumps and obstacles that could steer your ATV off-course.^[20]

1. Always be vigilant when you're driving an ATV, as there can be a lot of unexpected bumps and ditches in your driving area.

Method 4 of 4:

Driving in Different Areas

1.



Stay at a consistent speed where you can comfortably brake. Start at a slow speed, like 10 to 20 miles per hour (16 to 32 km/h). Don't speed off in your ATV just yet—instead, get a feel for the controls and work your way up to higher speeds. Avoid going at high speeds that are difficult to brake from, as this can lead to serious injury.^[21]

1. If you have experience with motorcycles, feel free to start riding at a faster speed.



Avoid scaling steep hills with your vehicle. Don't try to conquer the impossible on your ATV trips. While these vehicles are durable, there are some terrains that you shouldn't try to go over. While mounds and bumps are safe territory, incredibly steep hills are a big no-no for quads. If you don't feel comfortable scaling the hill, then there's a good chance your vehicle can't make the climb.^[22]

1. Test out your ATV on smaller hills to see how it fares. This helps you get an idea of what your vehicle can and can't handle.



Don't drive on public roads unless it's permitted by your community. Look online to see what your state, province, or country permits regarding ATV laws. Remember that ATVs are designed for rugged terrain, and aren't meant to be driven on paved roads like an automobile. Wherever you drive, make sure it's in a relatively isolated place where people won't be disturbed.^[23]

1. If you're driving on private property, make sure that you have the owner's permission before going for a ride.

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