

The Honda logo is displayed in a white rectangular box with a red border, featuring the word "HONDA" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

ATV Safety: Mud and ruts



With spring just around the corner, the ground is starting to warm up and we're likely to see softer soil opening the door to the tricky business of riding your ATV through mud and ruts. Honda's ATV riding expert, Lindsay Shields, offers the following advice:

Tyre pressures: Make sure your tyre pressures are correct (i.e. soft and flexible). If they are, your tyres will behave more efficiently and clear themselves of the mud that gets packed in between the treads. If the gaps between the treads isn't clear, you'll effectively end up running on slicks.

Mud: Whatever type of mud you end up riding through, you need to keep a steady pace, look forward

and constantly assess the landscape.

Boggy mud: Best avoided! If you do end up in a boggy area, don't panic. Make sure you're in 4-wheel drive and try reversing out on the same path that you've taken in – after all, the machine got you this far so it should be able to get you back out. Watch out for bogs in forests – it might look like a nice bit of grass, but as you ride over it, it becomes clear that the ground is very wet.

Sticky/clay mud: This clogs up your tyres so correct tyre pressure is key. The weight of the mud will sap the power so a bit more throttle will be required but try to avoid slipping the wheels at all costs – no jerky throttle movements. Honda has

a patented system called 'AP Suretrac' on most of its bikes which is great for these conditions – it's a torque-sensitive front limited-slip differential that transfers power to the wheel that has the most traction.

Ruts: Ruts are not all bad news and can actually help you with grip if you've got side slopes to negotiate as they can help to level out the terrain.

Mastery of ruts is all about picking your way through carefully and slowly and using your body weight. Think about how you would approach ruts if you were on foot. You'd probably shift your weight, going one foot at a time, positioning yourself at angles to the ruts etc. Think like this

when on your ATV and present the bike at an angle to the rut, put the front nearside wheel in first so you've still got three wheels on the flat and can rock yourself out if you need to.

Just before your front wheels go into the rut, move your body weight to the rear and use gentle acceleration to lift yourself through. When the back wheels enter the rut, shift your body weight to the front etc.

With wider ruts, always treat them as two separate tasks and don't get ahead of yourself!

In short, don't panic. Your bike should cope with almost anything; you just need to think out the strategy you're going to employ and go steady.



Honda offers a free EASI Rider Course® with every new Honda ATV. Ask your Authorised Honda dealer to register you for a course - it's well worth it as it can qualify in risk assessments for PUWER or HSE requirements.