

## A Buried ATV Can Ruin Your Weekend; A Product Guide for Winches

A winch is the best insurance you can buy for your ATV. When you find yourself stuck in a muddy bog or if the hill you're climbing gets too slick and steep, a winch can help you make the best of a bad situation.

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Nothing is better than setting off on a trail into the wild blue yonder on your ATV for a nice afternoon scouting trip. After climbing the rocky face of a mountain, you start your decent down into a beautiful valley and come across what seems to you like a shallow creek. But as you're treading through the creek, the water keeps rising until it's up over the tires and they lose their grip on slippery rocks. The next thing you know, you're stuck. Since you're travelling alone, there's no one around to help you get out, and assistance is more than two miles away. After 30 minutes of trying to push and pull it out, you realize it's there to stay. What can you do in this situation? You can't do much. You should probably start heading back to get help. If you would have had a winch, things could have been a lot different.

A winch is the best insurance you can buy for your ATV. When you find yourself stuck in a muddy bog or if the hill you're climbing gets too slick and steep, a winch can help you make the best of a bad

situation. Just secure the cable to a tree and let the winch do the rest. If a big buck you shot crashes down into a canyon, secure him to the cable and let the winch do all the hauling. You'll have him back up the hill in minutes.

Even if you don't use your ATV for hunting or backcountry traveling, winches come in handier than you think. A winch can make a two or three-man job around your ranch, acreage or cabin a painless job for one. Stubborn shrubs, bushes or old stumps are no match for the torque and pull of a winch. You'll be amazed at the many ways you can put a winch to work.

With so many winches out there, which one is the best for you? Before buying a winch, consider a few things so you get the one that fits your needs.

### Weight

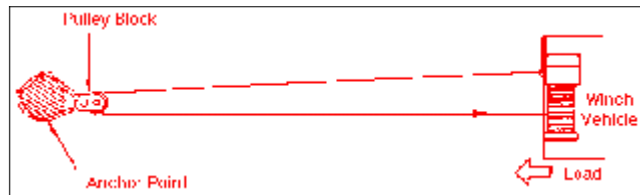
The first thing to do is to find out the weight of your ATV. In general, ATVs range in weight from about 400-700 pounds. A larger machine will probably require a winch with more power. If you suddenly find yourself knee deep in mud with a heavy ATV, you'll need more power to pull yourself out. If all you're going to do with the winch is pull yourself out when you get stuck, a good rule of thumb to follow is the lighter the ATV, the lighter the winch you can buy. However, if you want to pull out more than just your ATV when it's stuck, you should consider a winch with more power.

### Pulling Power

Two methods are used for pulling with a winch. These two methods determine the potential pulling power of your winch.

- Single-line method-A single-line pull means that you attach the cable directly to a tree or to the object you're pulling. The pulling capacity listed on the winch does not change.

- Double-line method-A double-line pull doubles the pulling capacity of the winch and is achieved by using a pulley block. When using a pulley block, the hook and cable are wrapped around the pulley block and then attached back onto the ATV. The pulley block can be anchored on a secure object (tree) to pull your ATV, and the winch, out of trouble. The other method is to secure the pulley block to a heavy load that is then pulled toward the winch.



With a single-line pulling capacity of 1,500 pounds, the use of a pulley block creates a double-line pull and doubles the winch's capacity to a 3,000-pound pulling capacity.

### Line Length

If you think you'll frequently be using your winch in a double-line situation, a 50-foot cable will give you the most range. When using the double-line method, the pulling capacity doubles, but your cable's range decreases by one-half. In other words, a 50-foot cable's range is decreased to 25 feet in a double-line pull. Line length is also important even in a single-line pull. If you're pulling yourself out of trouble and the closest tree is 30 feet away, a 25-foot cable won't get the job done. In reality, a longer cable will give you more range and more versatility.

### Important Features

To make your winch more convenient and easy to use, look for these important features as you shop so you get a winch that will work the best for your needs

- Freespooling clutch-This feature allows you to pull the cable from off the spool without having to pull against the gears. Pulling against the gears is slower than a freespooling clutch and will delay the time it takes to secure the cable to a tree. This is an important feature when you're in danger of losing your bike to a raging river and you don't have time to pull against the gears.

- Battery Leads and Terminals-Most winch companies include these as a standard feature. They keep you from having to run all over town looking for the right electrical hookups.

- Roller fairlead-It's the ideal fairlead for any situation. It also helps to guide the cable on and off the spool tightly and evenly at any angle.
- Hawse Fairlead-Like a roller fairlead, a hawse fairlead helps guide the cable on and off the spool tightly and evenly, but there is less cable abrasion protection than a roller fairlead.
- Cable Diameter-The larger the cable's diameter, the longer it will last. A large diameter cable can take more wear before it needs to be replaced.
- Remote Mounted Switch-Sometimes called a rocker switch, a remote switch is generally mounted on the handlebars and gives you the option of controlling the winch while on your ATV. Some come with six-foot cords that allow you to control the winch while pulling your bike out of a mud hole as you stand on dry ground.

#### Accessories

- **Winch Kit** - An ATV winch kit gives you all the attachment tools you need to latch on to any tree or stable object. The kit includes a tree strap, shackle, pulley block and a convenient carry case to keep it neatly in one place.
- **Winch Cover** - The most practical accessory is a winch cover. A soft winch cover will extend the life of your winch by keeping dust, dirt and other debris out of the motor and gear box when you're not using it.
- **Pulling System** - To save your rack, suspension or frame from expensive damage when pulling yourself out of a riverbed or while pulling a heavy object, get yourself a front and rear pulling system. They create the perfect place to anchor your tow hook when pulling out a stubborn tree stump or getting out of a bind in the backcountry. The rear system includes a 3/4-inch ball so you can conveniently haul a trailer. They're inexpensive if you consider having to rebuild your suspension or buy a new rack because you anchored the hook in the wrong place.
- **Plow** - If you're sick of shoveling snow, dirt or rocks . . . plow it! But instead of having to raise and lower your plow with a manual lifting lever, attach the plow to your winch cable for quick and easy maneuverability from your handlebar remote rocker switch. A plow can convert hours of hard labor into minutes. Blades adjust right, left and straight and the pitch can be set right, left, forward or back to accommodate any job.
- **Field Tree** - If you're bogged down and realize there isn't a tree within 50 feet, a field tree can save your bacon. Just auger the field tree into the ground, attach your cable and you're out of the mud hole or river bottom and back on the road.

Trust your instincts. When it comes down to it, hurting your back pulling your bike out of a river, walking miles back to camp for help or watching your ATV as it rolls down the hill makes you want to kick yourself for not having a winch. If something like this hasn't ever happened to you before, don't let it happen. Get a winch and ride free. This doesn't give you the freedom to go through any dangerous terrain you encounter, but if that little creek unexpectedly turns into a mud hole, you'll be ready.