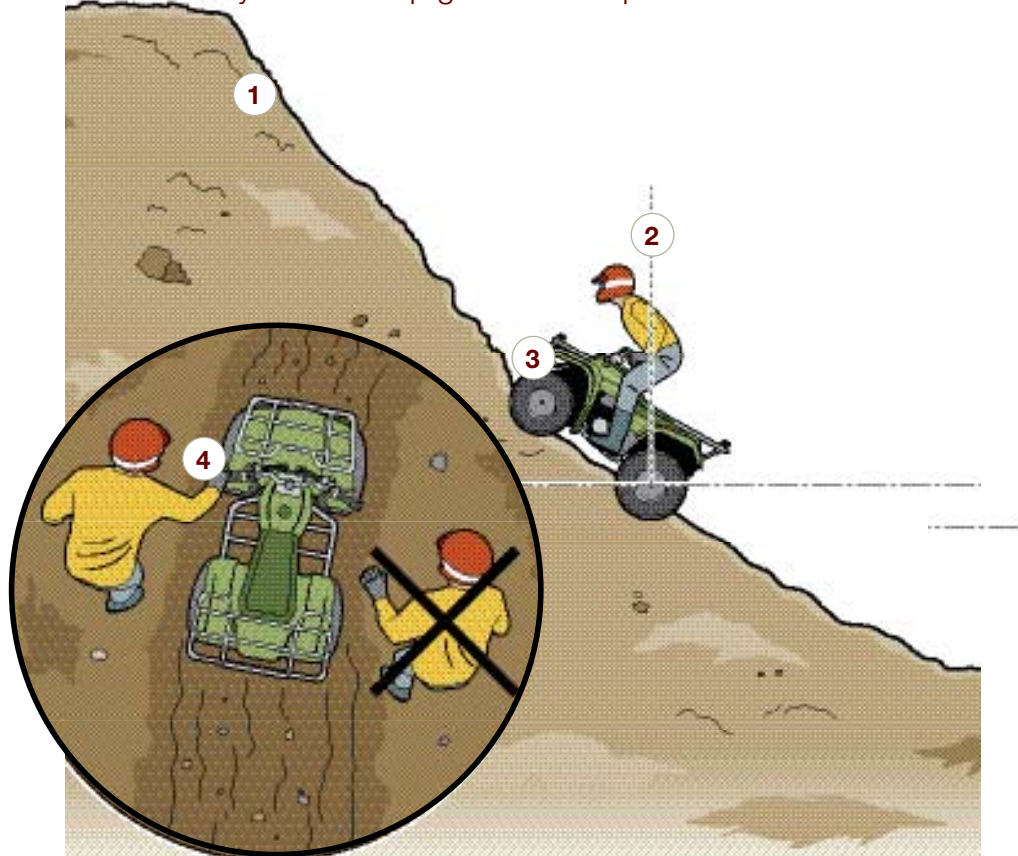


# Climb High

How to safely tackle steep grades on a quad BY KIRK DEETER



## [1] SCOUT THE HILL ON FOOT

Is there an established trail you can follow? Check the top of the climb for any potential blind dropoffs on the other side. Look for traction-robbing problems like rain ruts and loose shale. You also want to know about objects that could pop your front end up, like rocks or tree roots.

## [2] GET YOUR WEIGHT RIGHT

Position your torso over the gas tank, leaning into the hill. Imagine a line perpendicular to level ground running up through the hub of the quad's rear wheel. You want most of your weight in front of this line. Some riders prefer to stand; if you do, don't tense up.

## [3] GIVE IT SOME GAS

Put your quad in four-wheel-drive so the front wheels grab the ground. You need some momentum and speed to carry the grade. For most quads in most situations, high gear is actually a better option than low. Don't half-commit, putter, and slow down, or you'll spin out. Stay steady (not wild) on the throttle, and push your bars over when you crest the top.

## [4] GET OFF ON THE CORRECT SIDE

If things go south and you cannot turn the machine around, engage the front brake—never the rear brake alone. Slowly roll backward, keeping your weight over the front of the quad with your hand on the front brake. When you must hop off, grab the front brake and dismount to the uphill side. In the worst-case scenario—if you feel the ATV rolling over onto you—bail off to the side.

## [5] GO SINGLE FILE

Always climb one at a time. If two riders attempt it simultaneously and the lead ATV gets into a jam, the problem is doubled.

## [6] BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR ABILITY

Climbing grades takes experience and feel. Everyone has his own threshold. Start small, and build your skills and confidence. There's usually another route to consider. The penalties for exceeding your limits can be too severe to justify taking chances.