

Winching Do's & Don'ts

1. **Don't** hook the winch hook to the cable itself. The concentrated pressure will kink the cable & can damage it. Use a tow strap or something else with a hook on it & hook to that.
2. **Do** use a strap to go around a tree to keep from damaging or killing the tree.
3. **Do** secure the cable/strap as low on a tree or bush as possible to minimize leverage and the possibility of pulling out the tree or bush.
4. **Do** place a coat or similar object over a winch cable under tension so that if the cable breaks the coat will absorb the recoil & help prevent the cable from whipping around.
5. **Don't** step over a cable under tension.
6. **Don't** winch on very much of an angle, as this will bunch the cable up on one side of the drum and cause it to bind up.
7. **Do** leave five wraps of cable on the drum on a long pull, so you're not pulling from the very end of the cable. Cable attaching methods vary, but none are intended to hold what the winch is capable of pulling.
8. **Don't** use the winch cable like a retractable tow strap. The winch brake is not intended to be pulled on hard or jerked on; it is designed to hold the load between pulls.
9. **Do** use the winch's motor for maximum pulling power. By holding the brakes and spooling in the winch, you can pull a lot more that you can by pulling with the ATV in reverse.
10. **Do** use a snatch block to increase your pulling power. A snatch block is a pulley with a hook, or some other means of attaching it to a fixed object. By attaching the snatch block to a fixed object, or other ATV(s), running the cable from the winch around the pulley, and then hooking the cable back to the ATV with the winch on it, you double your pulling power. This will also cut your speed in half.
11. **Don't** spool in the cable under no load. Cable that has been spooled under light or no load will not spool in evenly across the drum and can cause tangles. Loose cable also takes up more room on the drum and can bind up on the winch frame. Wrapping cable around the drum under heavy load on top of cable that has been wrapped loosely will kink the cable and damage it. To prevent this...
12. **Do** keep the cable tightly wrapped. When you have finished winching a load, spool the cable in while someone holds on to the hook end as you guide it onto the drum so that the cable wraps up evenly across the entire width of the drum.
13. **Do** periodically re-spool the entire cable. Pull the cable completely off the drum & hook it to some fixed object. Using the ATV as a weight, spool the cable completely in, making sure the cable goes back-and-forth evenly across the drum.
14. **Don't** handle the cable with your bare hands. Always wear gloves when handling the cable or hook.
15. **Don't** use the winch to secure your ATV during transport; the brake could slip or release.
16. (The catch-all...) **Do** read the operators manual for your winch before use.

Sources: "Peterson's 4-Wheel & Off-Road" magazine, April '02 & April '06.

Owner's manual for my T-Max 2500lb winch.

In-the-field experience.