

Riding a Heavy Harley on Gravel

Key Techniques

Slow and Steady:

Go slow enough to maintain control, but not so slow that the bike becomes unstable.

Look Ahead:

Keep your eyes up and scan far down the road to anticipate obstacles like potholes, rocks, and soft patches.

Smooth Controls:

Avoid abrupt throttle use, braking, or steering, which can cause the tires to lose traction.

Abrupt Movements:

Sharp turns, hard braking, or sudden acceleration can easily cause a loss of traction.

Braking:

Favor the rear brake for slowing down and rely on the rear wheel for stability. Be extremely cautious with the front brake, as locking it on a loose surface can lead to a loss of control and a fall.

Wide Turns:

Make wider turns than you would on pavement to reduce the demands on tire traction and avoid the front wheel digging in.

Handling Turns and Stops

Straighten Out:

For corners, try to go through the apex in a straighter line, as leaning on gravel reduces traction.

Weight Distribution:

Transfer your weight to the rear for acceleration and to the front for braking to maximize tire grip.

Steer with Your Feet:

Steer by applying pressure to the footpegs, which allows for more delicate inputs than the handlebars.

Bumps:

Stay loose on the bike to allow it to move beneath you and absorb the impact of bumps.

What to Avoid

Light Handlebar Grip:

A tight grip on the handlebars will make it harder to control the bike and can fight against the natural steering corrections.

Squeezing the Bike:

Try not to "squeeze" the handlebars, as it can lead to counterproductive inputs.

Avoid Leaning in Turns:

Avoid deep leaning in turns on gravel; it can easily lead to the tires sliding out.