

# How to Lift a Fallen Motorcycle

(copied and edited from Clutch and Chrome - [www.clutchandchrome.com](http://www.clutchandchrome.com))

There are few things more stressful than the sight of your motorcycle lying on the ground. It's a gut-wrenching sight for a motorcycle owner, you're pride and joy lying on its side. Whether it came to be in this position from a vehicular mishap or the ground didn't prove to be as solid as you had thought, the first thing on your mind is getting the bike upright and checking for damage. Between the weight, hot surfaces and sheer awkwardness, picking up a motorcycle can be dangerous and cause serious injury if done incorrectly or under poor footing.

The first rule of picking up a fallen motorcycle is to find a few people to help. The second rule, if you don't find any help the first time, look or ask for assistance again! Ideally, the people offering to help should be riders themselves or at least have some kind of knowledge about motorcycles for a few reasons. Obviously, you don't want anyone else to get hurt, but with the motorcycle already laying on the ground you certainly need to avoid anymore damage.

Before any attempt is made to lift the bike some personal preparation is needed. Make sure you've **calmed down**. You need to think clearly and understand what needs to be done. And you need to be physically able to lift the bike. As with any type of heavy lifting, the golden rule is to keep your **body and back straight, and lift only with your legs**. Maintain control of the motorcycle and never twist your body while lifting. The majority of picking up a motorcycle is mental and methodical. Not only are motorcycles heavy but awkward shapes with pieces that move and parts that can be hot.

**Don't panic!** The very first step as you're looking at your baby on its side is to breathe. Breathe again. Take a few minutes to calm down. Tell yourself that this happens to everyone at some point in their years of riding. Remember that your motorcycle isn't going anywhere and unless you and your bike are located in a dangerous area there's plenty of time to pick it up. Seeing your bike lying on its side can be a traumatic experience, but it happens to everyone at one time or another. Quite frankly, your bike's not going anywhere without you. Spend a few minutes asking yourself questions and talking yourself through the situation: **are you hurt?** Are you able to pick up your motorcycle under normal circumstances? Do you want to pick up your motorcycle? Is it safe to pick up your motorcycle? You have the rest of your life to pick up your bike; take a few minutes to relax and assess the situation. It's best if you can get help. Instruct any new found help with the proper safety techniques.

**Take a good look around!** Realizing that your attention is focused on the motorcycle lying helplessly on the ground, but take a moment to understand where you are and what's going on. Are you and the bike in danger from other traffic? If there was someone else involved in the accident make sure they're busy looking for insurance information and not the quickest way to escape. If the motorcycle isn't in the flow of traffic and you've been involved in an accident it may help to leave it on the ground until law enforcement arrives on the scene.

If the motorcycle ended up on its side from a series of unfortunate events involving only yourself, ask yourself these questions. Do you have a solid surface to lift from? Is there gravel? Is the pavement wet? Are you right next to a ditch?

You've just dumped your pride and joy, the last thing you need is to end up slipping and getting pinned under your bike. That would just be a cherry on an embarrassment sundae.

**Check out the motorcycle!** Although it sounds like an obvious point, in stressful times like this you may just forget to turn off the engine. If you can, turn off the fuel using the fuel supply valve. Although spilled fuel is common, don't panic and remember that a spark is needed to ignite it. But if you smell gasoline, work with caution around the motorcycle. It may be so broken up that it can't stay up when stood back up.

Note which side the bike fell on. If the motorcycle is lying on its right side, put the sidestand down (yes, you will actually pull it up skyward) and put the motorcycle in gear. If the motorcycle is on its left side, you can't put the side stand down and can't put the motorcycle in gear. This is important since you really don't want to pick up your motorcycle and then immediately drop it onto its other side!

Big cruisers tend to be easier to lift because they have crash bars, side bags, or other parts that give a higher fulcrum to work with. You have up to 30 or 40 degrees already lifted for you as it lays on the ground. Sport bikes are lighter, but lay flatter on the ground. You have to lift most of the weight yourself.

Time to lift!

Facing Away from the bike, turn the handlebars to full-lock position with front of tire pointed downward.

Find the "balance point" of the two tires and the engine, engine guard, or footpeg. The motorcycle will be fairly easy to lift until it reaches this point because it's resting on its side. Once you start lifting from there, you are responsible for the most of the weight of the bike.

Squat down with your butt/lower back against the motorcycle seat. Be very careful to keep your back straight and your head up. Put your feet solidly on the ground about 12 inches apart, with your knees bent. With one hand, grasp the handgrip (underhand, preferably), keeping your wrist straight. With your other hand, grip the motorcycle framework (or any solid part of the motorcycle), being careful to avoid the hot exhaust pipe, turn signals, etc. Try to find a grip point close to your body.



Lift with your legs until they are nearly extended, then take small, baby steps backwards, pressing against the seat with your butt and keeping your back straight. On slippery or gravelly surfaces this technique probably won't work. On inclined surfaces this can be very dangerous. Be careful not to lift the motorcycle up and then flip it onto its other side! Adrenaline tends to push the bike over the other side if you're not careful. If possible, put the sidestand down and the bike in gear.

Set the motorcycle on its sidestand and park it safely. Evaluate the bike's condition. **Is it safe to ride?**

[The information given as a benefit for those with an interest in riding motorcycles. Our intention is to further discussion and enhance individual safety and skill. We disclaim any liability for the views expressed. Every motorcyclist is responsible for his or her own safety and that of their passengers. We do not accept any duty or responsibility toward any individuals. We urge all those using the information and views presented on this site to use their own critical judgment. When you may have any doubt about a safety or skill issue, we urge you to seek clarification and information from sources you trust, and to proceed with caution to ensure your safety.]