

# WITHOUT A HITCH

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# AL-KO

## Towing your two-wheeler



## Everything you need to know about transporting your motorbike





Chapter 1

# Preparing your trailer





## What you'll need

Trailer manufacturers usually offer trailers specifically designed for carrying motorcycles, but if you'd prefer to modify your current trailer to do the job, you'll want to add some features.

- ▶ **Front-wheel chocks:** These are attached to the motorbike trailer floor and come in various widths, lengths and complexities to suit your bike. There's even a multifunction wheel lock that prevents damage to the fork seals as it allows your bike's suspension to be active during transit.
- ▶ **Wheel channels:** Also mounted on the trailer floor, these prevent the back wheel from sliding around in transit.
- ▶ **Straps, ropes or chains:** Whatever you are using to secure the load, make sure it's rated to handle the weight.



- ▶ **Heavy-duty tie-down rings:** If your trailer doesn't already have these, you're going to need at least four per bike.

## How much weight can you tow?



To stay safe and on the right side of the law when towing a motorbike, it's important that both your trailer and towing vehicle are up to the weight they'll be towing.

Check the towing capacity of the vehicle you plan to use to ensure it

can handle the combined weight of your motorbike and trailer.

The owner's manual will usually list the ratings, but the information can also be found on the manufacturer's website.



Chapter 2

# Loading the motorbike





## How to load your motorbike on the trailer



Motorbikes are invariably heavy beasts and likely to topple over if you take a corner too fast or drive over uneven surfaces. So when loading your motorbike onto the trailer, the crucial issue is keeping it upright.

### Follow these steps:

- ▶ Put the bike into neutral and roll it onto the trailer, front end first.
- ▶ Lock the front wheel into its chock.

- ▶ Secure the rear wheels using straps or ropes connected to the tie-downs. Cam or ratchet straps are relatively inexpensive and make it easy to tighten your load.
- ▶ Strap down the bike using a criss-cross pattern, making sure it has no movement in any direction – sideways, forward or upward.
- ▶ It's advisable to lock the front forks in place using a spacer between the tyre and the triple trees (which attach the fork tubes to the frame). This avoids damage to the fork seals on rough roads.

## Keep within the law

Before you hit the road with your motorbike trailer, make the following checks to ensure you are compliant with legal requirements:

- ▶ Load distribution between the towing vehicle and trailer must be properly balanced, front to rear and side to side. Loads should be kept as low and as close as possible to the axle.
- ▶ The coupling must be strong enough to take the weight of the fully loaded trailer and equipped with a positive locking mechanism.
- ▶ The loaded mass of the trailer must not exceed the lesser of:
  - ▶ Rated capacity of the towbar and tow coupling.
  - ▶ Maximum towing capacity of the vehicle.
  - ▶ Maximum ATM of the trailer.

- ▶ Maximum rated capacity of the tyres.

- ▶ All trailers with GTM exceeding 750kg must have brakes. If the trailer is not fitted with brakes, the maximum mass of the trailer must not exceed the unladen mass of the motor vehicle.

The best rule is to always check load capacities and make sure your trailer is fit for it, taking into account the weight of the trailer.

If you're not sure what that is, look for its vehicle plate (VP), which lists the ATM, GTM and tare weight.



Chapter 3

# On the road





## Driving tips

Even when you've taken every precaution to make sure your precious cargo is secured on the trailer, the road can bring its own challenges.

Keep an eye on the bike while travelling to make sure it is handling the road and staying upright. If you notice it starting to move in any direction, stop as soon as it's safe then set it back in place and adjust the straps.

Take breaks every so often to test the straps and connectors, especially after a session of heavy braking, cornering or rough roads.

When driving in heavy traffic or weather conditions, remember that your vehicle is heavier than usual, so stopping and manoeuvring in tight spots may be a little more difficult.

Staying within the recommended weight and towball load should reduce the possibility of the trailer swerving

or snaking and going out of control. If it does happen, however, resist the temptation to steer out of the sway. Instead, ease off the accelerator and reduce speed gently until you regain control.

Keep in mind when carrying a load or pulling a trailer that you might need to adjust the headlights on your car. If you notice the trailer is causing your vehicle's rear end to drop, consider installing a weight distribution hitch to correct the imbalance.



## Want more information?

You'll likely want to keep your motorbike trailer in top condition, so check out **Without a Hitch** for hints and tips on keeping it greased, changing the lights or wheel hubs and upgrading the suspension.

And if you would like expert advice on equipment, accessories or parts for your trailer, please contact an **AL-KO Authorised Dealer.**



# AL-KO

AL-KO International Pty Ltd  
67-91 Nathan Road  
Dandenong South,  
Victoria 3175 Australia

p: (61) 3 9767 3700  
f: (61) 3 9767 3799

[www.alko.com.au](http://www.alko.com.au)