

The Way it Should Be

Maybe this is more of a Minnesota thing, but there are a lot of us in the middle of the country that ride snowmobiles at both low elevations and high elevations. We ride where there is snow, whether it be right here in Minnesota or out west in Montana, Wyoming or Idaho. And when it does snow, we don't want to be spending hundreds of dollars or hours of precious time getting a sled ready to go out West. You should be able to ride the same sled here, there, everywhere. This is the way it should be.

For most sleds, this is not reality. The only sleds that you can truly leave alone, totally 100%, from low elevation to high elevation would be the Arctic Cat Turbos. With the turbo on board, the engine makes the same power here, there and everywhere. Your clutching and gearing is power-dependent, so with any other sled that goes west you lose 3% of your engine power for every 1,000 foot elevation change, and when your sled makes less power you have to change the clutching, and in many cases the gearing.

So if you own an Arctic Cat Turbo, you can just load it onto the trail and go. No clutching changes, no gearing changes, no changes period. Load and go. As it should be.

But, not all of us have the cash for a turbo, and some of us don't want to deal with all of that added weight from the four-stroke engine with the extra plumbing and hardware of the turbo. Sure, the power is nice, but it costs you money and pounds.

So when we look at all of the rest of the sleds, the non-turbo four-strokes do tend to be more forgiving with their broader powerbands so they can work somewhat acceptably well with no changes, but we still have that extra weight on most models. But when we get to the two-strokes, one brand and model has always been better at this than the others – the Polaris RMKs.

Take a Polaris RMK 800, most any of them, and the only thing you need to do to convert it from 1,500 foot elevation to 8,000 foot elevation is change the flyweights. Yep, new cam arms. A set of three flyweights. Remove the drive belt, swap out the flyweights, put the belt back on, done deal. Less than \$100 and maybe ten minutes, if you know what you're doing. As it should be.

Hey, this is a pain in the rear for those of us who haul sleds back and forth looking for snow. Over the years the Polaris sleds have been the easiest ones to switch back and forth (was there a pun in there...switch back?). If you are the kind of rider where this capability is important to you, in our experience the Polaris RMKs and Switchbacks have been the easiest ones to switch back and forth, usually needing only a set of flyweights. Big engines are more forgiving than little ones, so this really applies more to the 800s than it does the 600s.

In Ski-Doo defense, they have the adjustable TRA primary clutch, but it is rare to see a Ski-Doo that we can run the heavy low elevation pins in and just use the clickers and get a rocking calibration out west. We still, at a minimum, need to install a lighter set of pins into the arms and then use the TRA clickers to dial in the operating RPM. Pulling a TRA clutch and swapping pins, while not really difficult, still takes far more time and effort than just swapping a set of flyweights on a Polaris. Those of you who have done both know what we be saying here. It's just an observation.



Get Rid of 11.5 Pounds – EASY

This one is almost a no-brainer; in less than ten minutes you can reduce the weight of your sled by 11.5 pounds. How? Remove the stock lead-acid battery and install a lithium battery from earthX. Not only do we get rid of over ten pounds, but your cold cranking goes from 270 CCA to 405 CCA, and your amp-hours almost double from 20 to 36.

So, what is the catch? You have to order the earthX lithium battery and install it into your sled. It will last for like eight years instead of only three years like most stock batteries and even has a two-year warranty, so you know it is good. It will charge to full capacity in less than two hours and it delivers full output all the way. It will not freeze like a lead-acid battery and it will hold a charge all the way through the summer, unlike your stock lead acid battery. It doesn't care if you flip your sled on its side or upside down, does not matter. These batteries are so good they should come in your sled right from the factory, but they don't simply because of the added cost compared to the stock heavy lead-acid battery. It only weighs 3.5 pounds instead of 15 pounds, making it a great way to shed weight. It's going to cost you \$349, but for the all of the reasons we just mentioned it is really a good deal. Lighter, more powerful, lasts longer, holds a charge and it really puts out, especially in the cold. Earthxmotorsports.com is all you need to know.

Did You Know?

.....Learn to recognize the symptoms of frostbite – specifically, waxy-white or pale appearance in your fingers, toes, nose or exposed areas on your face. Your skin becomes hard and numb. As your body's core temperature drops, hypothermia sets in. Symptoms of hypothermia include uncontrolled shivering, slow or slurred speech, memory lapses, shallow breathing, weakened pulse, frequent stumbling, cold, even bluish skin, irritable or irrational behavior, or drowsiness and exhaustion. At all costs, stay dry. Low temperatures combined with wind speed and being wet equals illness and injury.