

Can You Lift 800 Pounds?

By Mark Caldwell, Chapter Educator, WA-E

What if you had to pick up your Goldwing? According to Honda, the dry weight (without fuel and other important fluids) of a new GL1800 is 792 pounds. Add those fluids, not to mention the few, small, super-lightweight things we might carry in the trunk or saddle bags (60 pounds capacity combined) and 800 pounds is conservative.

Okay, so you're not really lifting 800 pounds. You're not going to lift it completely off the ground, and really you're just levering it into an upright position, so physics says it's less effort, but you get the idea. Could you do it? I've had to do it a couple of times in the last year. Last spring, going out for my first significant ride of the year, I became acutely aware that I was out of practice on my tight U-Turns, and gently tipped over my GL1200. Suffering damage only to my ego, I quickly got off, got into proper position, and picked it back up. You should have seen the wide-eyed expression of my friend who was on the trip with me. He had been told that if you tip over a full-dress touring bike, it will take at least two people to pick it up again. But I had it upright before he could get off his bike to offer help.

Don't get me wrong. It's not because I'm so strong. In fact I haven't lifted weights in quite a while, and I spend my work days working out on a computer keyboard. No, the reason I could lift it is because a few days earlier I had been reading through the Gold Book and found the page in the back that shows you step-by-step how to lift a Goldwing using a technique called the Boyd Lift. If you don't know this technique, take a few minutes to read about it in the Gold Book. I hope you never have to use it, but it would be good to know "just in case".

Oh, and the second time I had to use it? Four days after buying my new (to me) GL1500, as I was pulling away from a stop light, making a right hand turn, at a corner where my line of sight was partially blocked, I did a panic stop to avoid being hit by a car speeding toward me. Unfortunately I had just started the turn and was off-balance when I stopped. Again, I gently tipped over the bike and suffered only damage to my ego, thanks to the engine guard and saddle bag guard. But I learned several things from that experience, not the least of which was: When lifting your bike from the right side, put the side-stand down before you start to lift.