

Beginner Mountain Bike Skills

Mountain biking is an exciting sport that can be enjoyed by anyone who knows how to ride a bike. Compared to the average bike ride, it does present some danger. Therefore, you should master these basic skills before you hit the trails or the dirt.

You can practice these beginning skills at a local park, school, bike path, or simply around your house. If you can, try to find a location with a steep hill.

Get a feel for your pedals

Practice moving your foot away from the pedal, first while sitting on your bike with one foot on the ground. Next, move on to releasing and replacing your foot while pedaling around for a bit. Those with toe clip and clipless type foot pedals will want to spend a bit more time practicing.

Sit and spin for position

Simply sit on your bike and pedal around. You should keep your arms slightly bent. You should also adjust your seat height so your leg is 70 to 90 percent extended at the bottom of every stroke on the pedal. Keep your body relaxed, as there will never be a position where you should have either your knees or your elbows locked.

Shifting gears

Get a feel for shifting gears with your bike. The higher gears are harder to pedal and will go faster while the lower gears are easier to pedal and will help you ascend hills. As you get to steeper hills, its best to shift before you get to the hill rather than while your on it.

Coasting

You should spend a bit of time coasting while standing on your pedals, without actually sitting on the seat. Keep your arms bent but don't lock your knees. Now, try experimenting with shifting your body towards the rear end of the bike.

Pedal while standing

You should get as comfortable as you can with pedaling while standing on your bike. Try lifting yourself off the seat while standing on the pedals, then crank them around. You should try this in higher gears on flat ground then again in lower gears while on a hill.

Dropping down a curb

Try finding a curb where you can easily get to the upper portion of it. Practice at a moderate speed, standing and coasting right off the curb from the upper level to the lower level. Try this at different speeds until it becomes second nature.

Once you practice these techniques and get the hang of them, you'll be able to hit the trails feeling comfortable on your mountain bike. Even though it may take some getting used to, it'll become second nature before you know it.

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