

CUTTIES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GABBY MOLLOY

THIS ISSUE WE THOUGHT WE'D DO SOMETHING A LITTLE DIFFERENT, but first we want to make something very clear. Cutties are skids and there is quite a bit of angst against skids from track builders around the country which is fair enough. Skidding on trails leaves big messy ruts and makes a load more work for the people who maintain them. However, doing skids in a big wide open gravel car park away from crowds is a handy and pretty fun exercise for getting familiar with weight distribution and confidence in losing traction. This in turn leads to confident riders who are less likely to skid down trails because they know it is OK for their wheel to lose traction. A cutty is the name for a type of skid where you can get your back wheel to fishtail behind you. It's quite a bit of fun and not as scary as it looks! They are good for wet tarseal and gravel road only, and not something you want to do on trails as you need to be upright and over the front wheel, and if you were to hit a bump in that position you'd likely go over the bars.

First of all, and very importantly, we need to establish which brakes are which, a very handy thing to know anyway. Follow the brake lines down and make sure. For this exercise you do NOT want to use the front brake at all, back brake only! Wrap your hand around the handlebar of the front brake so that you aren't tempted to use it, and rest your finger on the rear brake.

Next we need to get all of your weight off your back wheel. This is because if you weight the rear wheel, it wants to stick to the ground and go in a straight line, whereas the front wheel is able to turn and acts like a uni cycle, moving independently of the rear. Having your weight over the rear wheel when you are trying to skid full stop is unnerving as the wheel wants to stick to the ground and will try to grip, hence it will require quite a bit of force to move it. Try rolling along with both pedals up (e.g., one in front, one behind) and arms straight so that you are upright, and then lean your pelvis into the handle bars. Once you think you have that sorted, try doing a skid in a straight line. Make sure it is back brake only. Practice until confident.



To add a fish tail you will need to do a little turn with the front wheel to initiate the curve. Apply your brake halfway through the turn which will make it step out. To keep it snaking you will need to rotate your hips back and forth. Muck around and you will soon work it out.

Have fun in the gravel, but please be conscious of other riders as it can be quite intimidating having someone unexpectedly rip a big skid right in front of you.

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