

LOW AND CENTRED



IN SKILLS TO DATE WE HAVE GIVEN YOU A BUNCH OF TECHNIQUES TO TRY OUT ON THE ROAD OR EASY TRAILS.

NOW WE'LL TAKE THOSE TECHNIQUES AND TALK ABOUT THEM A BIT MORE IN A TRAIL SITUATION, AND GIVE YOU SOME TIPS ON WHAT IT SHOULD FEEL LIKE.

We've talked about having a low and centred body position on your bike on technical terrain. The aim of this is to **GET YOUR WEIGHT LOW LIKE A RACE CAR**, and centred so that your wheels skip over the bumps rather than snagging on them.

In the photos you'll see that we have chosen a straight piece of trail with a series of steps and bumps. The idea is that when your body position is correct your bike will rotate around you **AS IF YOU WERE STANDING ON THE CROSS BAR OF A SEESAW** and your wheels will skip over the bumps evenly. The flipside to this is being off balance resulting in one wheel landing more heavily on the bumps than the other. Aside from being uncomfortable and slowing you down, every time you hit a bump it will throw you even more off-balance and your arms will get a workout trying to keep your body stable. If you ride a lot of downhill tracks, or even long cross country downhills, and you find you get pumped up or tired forearms, this is probably due to you being off-balance on the bike and fighting to stay stable.

Try to keep your elbows up as if you are doing a press-up on your handlebars and relax your grip on the seat with your thighs. Clamping your seat is possibly the biggest factor to cause a rider to be unbalanced on the bike as they become stiff and restricted in movement. The terrain you ride over is often bumpy and sometimes slippery. Something needs to absorb those bumps and **IT IS EITHER GOING TO BE YOU OR THE BIKE**. If you relax and let the bike take them, chances are the bike will respond happily to your requests. If it feels sketchy to brake, or the front wheel wants to wander all over the track as opposed to exactly where you want it to go, then you are likely off-balance.

Another important aspect of your position is **ALLOWING YOUR ANKLES TO FLEX** and absorb bumps. They are great at absorbing small and irritating stutter bumps that your thighs can't deal with. When you are standing up on your toes you automatically lock out that ability to absorb bumps.

It is also very important to get nice and **LOW AT THE FRONT**, i.e. bend your arms. If you ride upright with your arms taking the weight of your upper body you will have no arm suspension left to absorb those bumps. In the picture, notice how Dodzy's arms are moving up and down over the bumps, but his head and shoulders remain still. Now you can't complain about having double vision or watery eyes when your head is still!

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JAMES 'DODZY' DODDS AND GABBY MOLLOY RUN MTB SKILLS CLINICS AT SITES AROUND THE COUNTRY. THE CLINICS ARE AIMED AT ALL LEVELS OF RIDERS AND THEY CATER FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL TUITION CAN BE ARRANGED. CHECK OUT THEIR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

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