

# MAINTAINING FLOW



This issue we would like to focus on maintaining flow on singletrack. By 'maintaining flow' we are talking about riding a whole track at a constant speed i.e. without braking hard into corners and subsequently having to pedal back up to speed on the exit. Some days this happens very naturally, the days that we are all 'loving' mountain biking, and other days it just seems like you spend the whole time wrestling with the handlebars to get the bike to turn at all.

In this respect it is often easiest to think of your bike like a pair of ski's, a surfboard, skateboard, or any apparatus that has edges and requires you to lean the object for control. Mountain bikes actually have edges too. If you **TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT YOUR TYRES** (assuming they aren't slicks), the knobs on the edges are actually designed for cornering, but you are going to have to lean a little to allow them to contact the ground.

Firstly, before you get into leaning, it is super important that you **LET THE BIKE MOVE AROUND BENEATH YOU**, especially on rough terrain, otherwise you are going to end up like a rodeo rider and get bucked off your steed. We have talked about this quite a bit before so we're just going to remind you to let go of your seat with those thighs and let your elbows flare out as if you were doing a press up on your handlebars.

Next, we'd like to point out that the apparatus mentioned above (ski's, skateboards etc) don't have a set of handlebars yet they manage to turn corners just fine. If you ride along in a straight line then turn the handlebars hard to one side, you will most likely crash. But if you ride in a straight line then lean the bike to one side with your weight, it will naturally turn a corner.

Try riding down a road standing up off the seat, with both pedals up in a horizontal position, then lean the bike by putting a little bit more weight on one pedal. **START WITH THE LEFT SIDE AND CARVE A LEFT-HAND CORNER.** Now transfer your weight onto the right pedal and carve a right-hand corner. It may help to lean a little on your handlebars too.

Once you get the hang of it link the turns up so that you can do 'slalom turns' down the road in a nice even rhythm. Before you try it on the track, get back into body position and make sure you can **DO IT WITH YOUR WEIGHT LOW.** We don't want you hitting a bump and doing a superman.

You can think of trail riding now as surfing, and when you get good at guiding your bike around corners with your weight, you'll find you won't need to brake anywhere near as much, and it will **CONSERVE MUCH MORE ENERGY AND MOMENTUM.**

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