

HOW TO: SQUARE OFF A CORNER

I reckon squaring off a corner is one of the coolest things you can learn to do on a mountain bike; it just feels so cool. Have you ever watched someone in front of you punch a corner so hard you thought their rear tyre was going to peel off? It looks sick and works well too!

Its main use is in berms or slippery surfaces where the rider can turn quickly and aggressively, ready for the next section. On a berm the rider could use the squaring technique to push harder off the camber (making free speed) and make a sharper turn instead of cornering around the entire berm with the risk of the berm fading off before the corner is finished.

When it is slippery the rider can do the turn quickly in a grippy or cambered section rather than making a long curve where the traction may be unpredictable and the available grip is spread out over a larger area.

Here is how you do it:

The entire movement is a three part affair - three back to back turns that increase in force, the final being the actual intended turn. The main priority is holding your body weight up in the intended turn with a counter balance. As we've discussed before, every action has a reaction, so to make a sharp turn it must be preceded by a sharp turn in the opposite direction. If the rider does a wide, gentle turn, the next turn will be wide and gentle too.

In this example the intended turn is a "left hander". This is important to be aware of as the rider must set up quite a way back. For a left hand turn the order is 'left/right/left', for a right hand turn it is the opposite - 'right/left/right'.

#1 Enter the section in a straight line (not cornering!), preferably down the middle of the track.

#2 Depending on speed, about five metres out from the intended left hand corner rider must make a small lean/turn to the left followed by a sharper turn to the right then the final sharpest turn in the intended left hand corner. The entire movement should be completed in the space of around 5 - 7 metres (once again depending on speed - longer if moving faster). Note that the second turn is sharp with the front wheel but not with the rider's bodyweight - on the final left turn the rider can swing into the corner with their bodyweight and will feel quite safe trusting their tyres.

To refine, practice the three turns as they must be smooth and deliberate. They can also be practiced off the bike. Imagine a pair of handlebars out in front of you and get the body movement sorted standing. It will feel quite natural once you work it out.

You will know when you have done it right because your tyres will make an awesome "bbrrrrp" sound in the third turn.

Cool huh...



LEANING OUT TO THE LEFT...



...SHARPER TURN TO THE RIGHT...



...FINAL TURN INTO THE CORNER

