

HOW TO: RIDE DROP-OFFS

Drop-offs are often misunderstood.

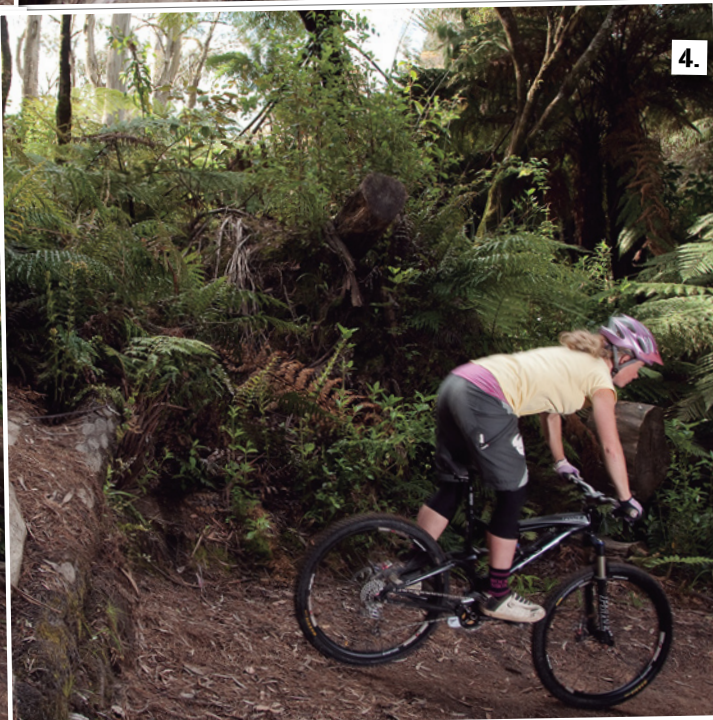
Firstly, they are not 'rollovers' and this is an important distinction as a rollover can be done at a range of speeds and by anyone... a drop-off however must be treated as a 'jump', e.g. you get some air time. The easiest way to work out if you are dealing with a drop-off or rollover is to stop and look at it - never a bad idea, and see if the shape of the lip is at right angles into a vertical drop or not. If the edge is rounded and the transition back to flat is curved then you can roll it (note if you are going fast it is likely you will still treat it as a drop-off because your speed makes it impossible to touch the downslope. If this applies to you chances are you have already worked that out so don't worry).

If you establish that the section constitutes a drop-off then here is some advice.

1. You need to be able to keep the front wheel up in the air long enough for the rear wheel to touch down. If you have never attempted this before it is not a good idea to try it on the biggest drop you can find - a curb on the street will do just fine.
2. Do not pull up on the handlebars, this will only make you twist to one side or land with your front wheel sticking straight up in the air, or over rotate on landing. All movements like this must come from your feet/ankles and are a downwards 'compression' on takeoff - not a 'pull up' as it often looks like.

The idea is that you keep the wheels level by pumping and then compressing the bike as a spring, starting centered and finishing centered. If you are unsure how to find the centre of your bike and plant yourself it is probably a good idea to come along to a clinic with us before trying this out...

Pumping is building a rhythm of weighting and unweighting you and the bike. In this situation it is used to actively compress the bike into the lip of the drop, in turn keeping the front wheel level with the rear rather than it tipping off the edge.



There are three parts to the movement.

- Start a rhythm by pumping along straight before drop.
- On the lip, time the pumps to be doing a deliberate 'load' right on the lip.
This downwards pump will spring the bike up off the lip keeping both wheels level.
- On landing absorb as if you were on a trampoline. E.g. bend your knees enough to take the harshness out of the landing but not so much that you collapse under your own weight.

Also, make sure you land centered.

This is pretty important. If you land with your weight off the back, your bike is going to shoot out from underneath you. In fact I have actually seen someone load up their rear wheel so hard on landing that they did a backwards somersault on the spot... unfortunately they didn't land back on their two wheels.

Try it out on the curb until you can consistently control the movement.