

HOW TO: DO A MANUAL



A manual is a handy little trick for keeping your socks dry on puddly days and keeping flow on really rolling terrain. The idea is to pivot backwards around the rear wheel, balancing the height of the front wheel by how much you lean back. E.g. if you don't lean back the front wheel will flop straight back down. On the track you can 'drive' the front wheel up and place it on the top of a hump in the track (or other side of a puddle) and allow the rear wheel to ride through the dip between. It is traditionally used by BMX riders to carry more speed through a six pack of rollers whereby they have too much speed to roll/pump them.

The key when learning manuals is that you are pushing yourself away from the bars, not pulling them towards you.

Start off the bike, standing next to it with both brakes on. Practice compressing the forks and using the resulting spring to throw your weight back. When your arms reach full extension let them lock into place and continue tipping back. The bike will pivot around the rear wheel and the front wheel will come up off the ground quite effortlessly. If it doesn't, keep practicing till it does.

Note: Keep both brakes on or the bike will roll and make sure your arms extend and stay extended.

Now you can try it on the bike. Roll along slowly with

your finger ready on the rear brake (if it comes up higher than you would like you can drop the wheel straight back down by putting the rear brake on). Lean forward to compress the front fork and use the spring to throw you backwards (not too violently), and just as in the off-bike drill, make sure arms extend to full lock and continue tipping back. The front wheel should come up around 2 inches off the ground. Practice this until you can do it smoothly and consistently.

- To get more height, preload the fork harder to get more spring or,
- If the front wheel feels like a lead weight then you are probably not leaning back enough to unweight the front wheel as it comes up.
- To control the movement, use your legs to push and absorb, keeping your balance point by leaning back more or using the rear brake to bring the wheel back down.

In reality a small manual will be enough for 90% of the trails, whether it be keeping the front wheel out of a puddle or stopping it from bottoming out in a hole. A perfect 'coaster' manual is mainly used on the BMX track or to impress your partner (who will no doubt be very impressed).