

HOW TO: RIDE OFF-CAMBER ROOTS

An off camber root is a root that is not positioned at a right angle on the track and so is likely to make the wheels slip to the side.

This situation is very similar to riding off camber terrain, just easier as the rider doesn't need to manage their braking or balance to such a degree. In the dry you can often ride across off camber roots without tears if enough momentum is carried but in the wet it is usually a different story, as you have probably discovered.

Off camber roots are very common because roots grow out of trees (gardening lesson #101) and MTB tracks use trees to define corners (e.g. the track turns around the tree). If you try to ride around the tree in one long corner you are often forced to corner across roots causing your wheels to slip.

You have two options: 1, ride over the root; 2, ride around the root. Both options require that you are perpendicular to the root.

OPTION 1:

In this case you decide to ride OVER the root. If you look at the picture, the lower part of the root which looks less intimidating will require that you make a turn over it. What you need to know is that a bike will plough over very large obstacles if you let it, but a bike does not like turning over/on large obstacles. When riding roots, look for the straightest and/or most perpendicular line.

This means that in root sections you will need to scope out a different entry line (three or four metres back from the root), so that you can do the turning on the dirt and then let go of the brakes and hit the root straight on with momentum.

OPTION 2:

If you decide to ride AROUND the root, which is often faster as a big square edged obstacle will slow you down, you need to line the bike up so that both wheels miss the root.

This is the same as driving a car with a trailer around a tight corner - you need to allow enough space for the rear wheel to make the corner too i.e. if you turn in too tightly the trailer bumps over the curb or in this case the rear wheel tags the root and slips to the side making you lose your balance.

As you approach the root, turn a bit further out than you think is necessary (in the picture the rider has turned further to the right rather than straight at the end of the root) so that the rear wheel has enough room to follow the front. If you don't, the front wheel will make it around but the rear wheel will catch it and slide all the way along making you lose balance.



OPTION 1: OVER

1.



2.



3.



4.



OPTION 2: AROUND

1.



2.



3.

