



LINE CHOICE

Photography by Graeme Murray

Now that we have given everyone a few things to think about over the last few issues we'll start to put them together. The best technique that you can practise outside of the trails is leaning your bike (Issue 16 Apr/May '06) as this encompasses almost all of the points we have covered so far. Getting a good rhythm of 'S' turns going down a road on your way to work will teach you control, and familiarity with a good cornering position.

Now, a common observation of cornering is that the tighter the corner, the harder it is to ride around. Agreed. One point we are yet to introduce though is line choice. You may have noticed that by leaning your bike you are able to corner much faster and often

end up over steering or cutting too close to the object you are cornering around.

If you have ever watched a Moto GP or the F1 cars on T.V, you might have noticed that they don't ride around in the centre of the track. Rather, they seem to cut very close to the inside of the corner on the chicanes while maintaining a semi-straight line. The technical term for what they are doing is called apexing a corner and it is a pretty handy thing on a mountain bike too.

Before we get into how to apex a corner, one handy tip is that if you see a bunch of corners up ahead, slowing down a little will

make it easier to ride smoothly the whole way around the corner rather than having to brake in the corner and pedal out of it.

So, when you see a right-hand corner up ahead, slow down and move to the far left-hand side of the track. As you approach the sharpest part of the corner, start easing the bike in so that you ride across the tightest point. This will set you up on the right-hand side of the track, wide and ready for the next left-hand corner.

Feel free to use the whole track, that's what its there for. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW THE SKID MARKS DOWN THE CENTRE JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE THERE.**

The other convenient use for this technique is riding over wet roots. As you may have observed, roots often fan out from the trees that a track is built around. When you cut tight early on in a corner you end up having to corner on the roots, hence your back (and often front) wheel steps out giving you a rather uneasy sliding feeling.

If you approach the corner from the outside edge, when you come to cutting inside and riding over the roots, they will conveniently be perpendicular to your bike and not likely to make you slide.



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