

DYNAMIC MOTIVATION

Climbing & descending in rough terrain

In the last article we discussed getting started in a solid body position. For most people the key to getting the most out of their riding is to be stable and balanced on their bike. When you are able to maintain this state it improves confidence, safety, speed and the ability to deal with changing terrain. In this article we will look at continuing this principle into climbing and descending rougher terrain.



Climbing

There are those that love and embrace the challenge of a hard climb and for others it is a necessary evil, it gets us to the top of the hill and can vary from hard work to downright unpleasant depending on the terrain. There are two main keys to efficiently climbing the first is to be really fit and that is a problem for a different day, the second is the correct body position. A number of you will have experienced the common problems climbing technical or steep terrain of lifting the front wheel or spinning the rear, both of these problems make it really hard to climb and they are caused by poor body position. The key to effective climbing is to get forward and low. To achieve this there are four key points you need to think about.

1. Pick an easy gear. You need to be able to spin up the hill so you want a relatively easy gear.
2. Move your bum forward on the seat. The steeper the climb the further forward you need to be, this can mean sitting up on the pointy part of your seat.
3. Lean forward. You want your chest nice and low towards the bars.
4. Drop your wrists. This gets your arms low and pulling back rather than up. You don't want to lock your elbows in, we used to teach that but it makes it harder to deal with turns and changes in the trail so has been rethought as trails are getting rougher.

How do you know if you are in the right position? If you are balanced and in a stable position there should be very little pressure on your hands in fact you should be able to ride one handed if really well balanced.

This gives you the basic seated position but there will be times when you need a bit more push or you have to let the bike move under you a bit to deal with rougher terrain. To do this rather than standing up and cranking move to a hover position. To achieve this you stay in exactly the same position you were in you simply move your bum off the seat a few centimetres. The trick is to stay low and forward but move your weight off the seat and onto the pedals. This will provide the best balance between power and traction. Head out and give it a go you will find it will significantly improve your climbing on steep or technical trails.



Descending

Once again with descending it is still important to be keeping centred on the bike. There is still often the misconception that you need to move your weight back when descending or rolling down steep sections of trail. While going downhill you still need to be able to turn and stop so you need weight on the front wheel and maintaining a solid ready position will give you more control.

This position is

1. Chin over stem
2. Bum over seat
3. Elbows forward

When going down a steep rollover moving back straightens your arms and then as the front wheel drops you will get pitched forward. To alleviate this you need to get forward and low as you are approaching the rollover. As your front wheel goes over the edge you can then let it drop away from under you so the bike doesn't pull you forward. Once over the edge and heading down move back to your ready position to maintain control and so you can deal with whatever is coming up.

If you are interested in more tips and information check our free face book group at www.facebook.com/groups/weridemountainbikes... See you on the trails!

