



SKIP THE SKID



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

Learn how to properly brake on a mountain bike by using both brakes simultaneously to slow down in a controlled way in order to minimise the impact on the trail.



Learning experience



Topics

MTB specific activities

Erosion



15-20 min



Participants

- Understand the damage (erosion) caused by skidding to the natural environment
- Are able to ride without skidding and without damaging the trails



Suitable for
outdoor sport instructors
and course participants



Practical sessions



Outdoor F2F



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Activity instruction

There are two elements to braking

1. To slow down in a safe way
2. To minimise the impact on the trail.

Both elements go hand in hand. Wrong braking technique (hard braking and only using the rear brake) could make you skid. Skidding is both losing control and damaging the trail tread.

Demonstrate skidding- What is most important here is to let the group experience in a safe environment experience what happens if you ride hard and only use the rear brake. Find a flat, straight dirt road, perhaps even the carpark at the trail head. Have your participants build some speed on their bikes, and then brake hard with the rear brake.

What happens? The rear wheel will skid, and lose control. Repeat the same exercise, but now with the instruction to use both brakes evenly and gently. The result will be that people slow down in a controlled way without skidding. Have the participants look at the difference made on the gravel/dirt surface between skidding and braking correctly. Explain how skidding on very steep trails could lead to more erosion, and what the impacts of erosion can have on the natural environment.

There are many different braking exercises, and great resources to share with the participants on how to brake like a Pro.

Potential variations

Add other variations like slowing down before a corner and not in the corner itself. Anticipation on what's in front of you is key, be sure you slow down before any trail feature to minimise impact on the trail.



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Background knowledge

Erosion due to MTBing is similar to hiking but within MTB it is more dependent on skills/ driving technique (Grapentin et al., 2018). In addition to this behavioural component, path / trail design and alignment is one of the critical elements whether erosion is likely to take place or not on recreational trails.

For example, contour trails are paths that gently traverse a hill or side slope. It's characterised by a gentle grade, undulations called grade reversals, and a tread that usually tilts or out slopes slightly toward the outer edge. These features minimise tread erosion by allowing water to drain in a gentle, non-erosive manner called sheet flow. When water drains in thin, dispersed sheets, dirt / soil stays where it belongs - on the trail.

Two critical tips to prevent erosion are:

1. Avoid the Fall Line: Fall-line trails usually follow the shortest route down a hill – the same path that water flows. The problem with fall-line trails is that they focus water down their length. The speeding water strips the trail of soil, exposing roots, creating gullies, and scarring the environment.
2. Avoid Flat Areas: Flat terrain lures many trailbuilders with the initial ease of trail construction. However, if a trail is not located on a slope, there is the potential for the trail to become a collection basin for water. The trail tread must always be slightly higher than the ground on at least one side of it so that water can drain properly.



Key words

#erosion
#MTB
#trail design



Source

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