

SPORT GUIDELINES

BASIC BMX SKILLS

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

To negotiate a BMX track successfully, requires the skills of starting, pumping, cornering and jumping, as well as pedaling the bike!

STARTING

The BMX start involves three main areas, the stance, timing and snap. To make good starts a rider needs to develop all three areas & be consistent in delivering each skill every gate.

Stance: Initially set the pedals in line with level ground and adjust higher or lower depending on the angle of the starting gate. The steeper the start ramp, the higher up the leading pedal can be placed. The rider's back should be straight, with the hips back over the back wheel. The head should be up, looking down the track and the shoulders should be wide. Elbows and legs should be slightly bent to prevent the locking of joints and the wrists should be rolled forward.

Timing: The aim in timing the gate is to start your forward motion as it is released and drops down. Due to human reaction times the rider must anticipate the release of the gate to get the best possible start. To help achieve, the rider should follow these points.

- i -Pre-load the body by shifting the hips and upper body back.
- ii -Begin forward movement prior to the snapping action (the pre snap).
- iii - At the right instant propel your body forward (the Snap) and put all your effort into the leading pedal.

The Snap: At the right moment the rider must throw shoulders and hips forward above the front of the bike. The hips and shoulders must stay forward for the first pedal to generate the maximum amount of leverage and power to get as much forward momentum as possible. Keeping your shoulders & hips forward, then helps your ability to attack the top of the pedal stroke into the second pedal.

PUMPING

Pumping involves riding through obstacles without pedaling by pushing down hard on the handlebars and pedals with arms and legs respectively on the down ramp of every obstacle. This is the most common way of tackling a rhythm section and once it has been practiced you can generate more speed through a series of obstacles even though you do not pedal.

The basics of a pump is to lift your weight (but not your bike) up over the front face of a feature and then pushing down with your weight on the backside transition of the same feature. The combination of lifting & pushing produces forward momentum, which can be combined over multiple features creating speed without pedaling.

The key is for your legs & arms to do the work and your body/head to stay level and focus on the track ahead.

CORNERING

There are several different ways of tackling a corner during racing. There is no right or wrong way to every corner, it will depend on the race situation you are in. The key to cornering is understanding what is happening around you & to action a corner benefit your race position.

If you do not wish to let other riders overtake you stay close to the inside line so they cannot cut inside you. Make them ride the long way around the outside.

Do not follow behind the same line as the rider in front is taking as you will not be able to overtake and if they crash, you may crash into them.

Depending on the size or shape of the banked berm, it may be faster to pedal hard all the way around it than taking the slower inside line. But remember a rider taking the lower inside line and running wide could cut you off on the exit of the turn.

A good alternative is to enter the corner wide and then cut down to the inside on the exit.

All cornering lines should be constantly practiced, to get used to the many options.

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ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Once you have the basics right, you can progress to higher level of skills that will allow you to attack a track with more speed.

Attaining these skills is all about practice and having fun with them. The more you practice different styles and skills, the more options you will have to use within a race.

JUMPING

From over a feature or from one peak to the next, simply involves pulling up slightly on the handle bars as the rider reaches the lip of the front face of the feature and then landing on the back or downward face. This skill can be faster in using the launch and landing to generate more speed, or the jump may allow you to jump over a tricky feature that is slow or once you cannot pump at speed.

The more time you are in the air the slow you are. So the key to jumping is to stay low which is the shortest possible route from take off to landing. This skill will come later once you master the basics of jumping. It comes from understanding the balance of weight when taking off and using that body position to push forward in the air

The key to jumping is confidence and you controlling the bike, don't let the bike control you. Then start and practice from small jumps to large.

MANUALLING

Is simply lifting the front of the bike through the center of a double jump while the rear wheel is on the ground and the front wheel clears the peak of the second jump. For successful manuals the rider should -

Suck up the front of the first feature you are attacking

Once over the peak, push down with your legs on the back or down face of the first feature

Ensure the front wheel remains high enough to clear the peak of the second part of the feature.

Keep you head up & focus over them top of the next peak

Once the front wheel clears the peak of second feature push your front down and un-weight you legs to pull the back of you bike over the second feature.

Push down the back of the second feature like the pumping action will now generate more speed.

The key to Manualling is keeping you head up focusing over the next feature. This skill will allow you to move through pumping section much faster and can generate more speed than a pump if done well.

MASTERING SKILLS

As mentioned above the key to all BMX skill is about practice, practice, practice. Learning & mastering many different skills is key to increasing your race speed,. So every option of a skill should be mastered, so they can be used in any race situation.

There are many BMX Skill books and online manuals. Find one you can understand & read the theory. Then get out and ride, as this is best way to learn. Find the best way that suits your riding style and ride to have fun.

Once you feel natural at a skill, you will then be able to use it at any time.