

How to Drift on a Bicycle

Explore this Article ■ [Learning the Basic Motions](#) ■ [Practicing Skidding](#) ■ [Expert Q&A](#)
■ [Tips and Warnings](#) ■ [References](#)

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Drifting—also known as skidding when you're doing it on a bike—is a technique where you approach a corner on your bike at a high speed and move around the turn as your back tire loses traction with the ground. To successfully skid around a corner, you should lean into the turn as you're going around it and shift your body weight forward. Skidding on a bike takes practice, but once you get the hang of it, you can use the technique to improve your speed and ride private downhill trails with ease.

Method 1

Method 1 of 2: Learning the Basic Motions



1 Pedal quickly toward a turn. The faster you're going when you get to the turn, the easier it will be to get your back tire to skid. Riding downhill toward a turn can help you pick up speed.^[1]

Tip: Keep in mind that skidding can ruin trails, especially when they are wet. Avoid skidding on public trails. You might also want to volunteer with your local trail-building organization if you plan to skid.



- 2 Lean in the direction of the turn once you reach it.** Shift your body weight in the direction you're turning so your body and bike are at about a 45-degree angle from the ground. Keep leaning as you go around the corner of the turn.^[2]
- For example, if you're taking a left turn, lean your body to the left.



- 3 Shift your weight forward as you go around the turn.** To shift your weight, lean slightly forward over your handlebars. This will lighten the load on your back tire, which will let it skid off the ground. As you're going around the turn, you should start to feel your back tire skidding outward. Gently press the rear brake if you need help getting the tire to break loose.^[3]



4 Extend your inside foot out so it's hovering slightly above the ground. Your inside foot is your foot that's closest to the inside corner of the turn. Continue to hold your foot out just above the ground as you go around the turn.^[4]

- For example, if you're taking a right turn, your right foot would be your inside foot.
- If you feel like you're skidding out of control or your bike is going to spin out, plant your inside foot on the ground to stabilize yourself.



5 Bring your body and bike upright again once you complete the turn. This will help your back tire regain traction after skidding. To bring yourself upright on your bike, stop leaning into the turn and pull your body weight up.^[5]

Method 2 of 2: Practicing Skidding



- 1 Practice skidding at slower speeds first.** Skidding is easier when you're going faster, but higher speeds can increase your chances of wiping out. When you first start out, approach turns slowly and work on leaning into the turn and shifting your weight forward. Once you get the motions down, gradually increase your speed going into the turn.^[6]



2 Try skidding in a gravel parking lot before you practice on a trail. Use cones or another marker to indicate where you should turn in the parking lot. Then, pedal toward that spot and try to get your back tire to skid outward as you go around the turn. Practicing in a parking lot is safer than practicing on a downhill trail, and you won't have to worry about damaging the trail.^[7]

Tip: Remember, never skid on a public trail because it will ruin the trail for other users! Only skid on a trail if it is a private one that you own.



3 Skid around wide, round turns when you're starting out. Thin, sharp turns give you less room for error and less time to skid, so they're not the best to practice on. Look for turns that are round and wide so you have more time to work on your form as you go around them.^[8]



4 Be persistent. Skidding is an advanced biking move, and it can take a lot of practice to get it down. If you keep spinning out or your back tire isn't skidding outward, try adjusting how much you're leaning in and shifting your weight forward. You can even ask someone to film you practicing so you can see what your form looks like. Keep practicing and eventually you'll get there!



Expert Q&A

Question

Do this work with a fixed-gear bike? (Rear wheel brake)



Ikaika Cox
Bicycle
Mechanic
Expert Answer

Skidding is typically the deceleration method for brakeless fixed-gears. To skid, move your weight forward on the bike and lock your legs to get the tire to slide on the ground. This will help you come to a stop quickly. Also, put a front brake on your bike.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 3

Question

Can I counter-steer on a bike? If so, how do I keep up with the steer?



Ikaika Cox
Bicycle
Mechanic
Expert Answer

Yes, but you don't counter-steer a skidding bike like you counter-steer a drifting car. Typically, your skid will only last one turn. It takes a lot of practice to determine how and when to steer, so figure that out while you're practicing in a parking lot.

Helpful 6 Not Helpful 7

Question

How do you get that perfect Tokyo drift?



Community Answer

Lock up around a bend and control it with the opposite lock. Also the more speed, the longer the drift, but not too much speed. The surface along with the tires you're using will effect your drift.

Helpful 32 Not Helpful 3

Question

How do I tighten the rear brakes on a mountain bike?



Community Answer

Screw up the fronting screws, pull out wire of the brake, then tighten the bolt.

Helpful 18 Not Helpful 4

Question

Do we have to counter-steer during the drift or after the drift is over?



Community Answer

During but also after. You only use it when the bike slides out too much.

Helpful 11 Not Helpful 3

Question

Can I do this on a suburban neighborhood street?



Community Answer

Drifting a bike can be done on asphalt, just at a higher speed, also if the ground is wet. Drifting is also possible on surfaces with loose stones, leaves or gravel.

Helpful 25 Not Helpful 10

Question

How do I do a burnout with a bike?



Community Answer

Go to a slippery area and shift to high gear. Keep your fingers on the brakes, and pedal as hard as you can for three seconds.

Helpful 20 Not Helpful 9

Question

Does a lighter bike help with the drift?



Community Answer

Not necessarily, you can drift both heavy and light bikes. Drifting is not like doing a wheelie. While doing a wheelie, it is going to be way easier when you do it on a lighter bike, and it's going to be harder when you do it with a heavy bike (with suspension, for example), but with drifting, the weight doesn't matter.

Helpful 13 Not Helpful 5

Question

Does the bike have to have any brakes?



Joaquin Fernandez
Community Answer

No, but it helps in case you are going a little too fast or want to stop or slow down after a drift.

Helpful 3 Not Helpful 2

Question

Is a mountain bike good for drifting?



Community Answer

It depends on a lot of factors. Generally, you want tires about an inch or less in width, and smoother tread patterns. The ground should also be relatively smooth, and made of a loose material, like gravel or sand. Generally though, any mountain bike should be able to drift around a slippery trail. On a rainy day, I can get my mountain bike with a flat tread pattern to slide on the street.

Helpful 10 Not Helpful 12

[See more answers](#)



Warnings

- Always wear a helmet when you're riding a bike.

References

1. ↑ <https://www.bicycling.com/training/skills/art-drifting-around-corners>
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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **Ikaika Cox** and by wikiHow staff writer, **Kyle Hall**. Ikaika Cox is the Shop Director at the Salt Lake City branch Bicycle Collective in Salt Lake City, Utah. He has been a bike mechanic since 2012, beginning as a volunteer with the Provo Bicycle Collective, and growing and honing his skills as a bicycle mechanic and educator in multiple Bicycle Collective locations over the years. He now leads the Salt Lake City branch of the Bicycle Collective. This article has been viewed 251,710 times.

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