

Jumping Instruction Manual, Part 2.



NINJA MOUNTAIN BIKE PERFORMANCE

How To Stay On The Pedals When Jumping

This is Part 2 of our two part Jumping Instruction Manual. If you haven't read it yet, be sure to download [Jumping Instruction Manual, Part 1](#).

One of the frequently asked questions we get about jumping has do do with why riders struggle with keeping their feet in contact with the pedals once airborne. Below, is a email we received from Rich G., a recent [Jumping Mini-clinic](#) participant ...

Hello Ninjas!

Thanks again for an awesome experience at the last jump clinic; I've been telling everyone who will listen how awesome it was and can't wait for my NICA racer/daughter to attend.

I've been practicing the new skills, but have a question..... If I was riding clips, I might be blissfully ignorant, but riding flat pedals, I'm noticing that on certain jumps, my feet are NOT staying planted on the pedals. Landing with one's feet floating an inch above the pedal platform is unnerving to say the least, but it's good that I'm aware that I'm doing something wrong (SPD set up would rob me of that).

Do I need a punchier attack/explosion on takeoff? More of a bar push (forward and down) in the air? Any coaching is appreciated.

The guy on the gold Intense Spider 29C,

Rich G.

How To Stay On The Pedals When Jumping

The first thing we'd like to check is that you have a good shoe/pedal combination. Good shoes and pedals are vital for maintaining contact with your bike. Purpose built shoes work far better than any kind of tennis or skate shoe, Five Ten Impact VXi are the best we have tried and are recommended.



Even the most aggressive flat pedals will not be effective without good shoes. As for the pedals themselves, thinner is better as they lower your center of gravity and it is easier to control the angle of your pedals. A concave shape also helps maintain the most contact points with your shoe.

We've had great success with Specialized Boomslang pedals and have found them to work very well.

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The next thing to consider is foot placement. You should place your foot on the pedal so that the axle of the pedal sits behind the ball of your foot. This differs to how you would place your foot with clipless pedals and will help to prevent you from springing up and off of the pedals if you extend your foot downwards.

There are a couple of techniques I would suggest to make sure your feet do not raise off the pedals when jumping.

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Firstly, make sure you are relaxed while approaching the jump. If you are tense on takeoff you will be stiff in the air which can cause you to become unbalanced or push the bike away from you.

Make sure you use a Point of Commitment when approaching the jump. Once you reach the Point of Commitment stop pedaling, relax and center yourself on the bike.



Compress down into your bike right before you begin the transition up the face of the jump. Push through your arms and legs (mostly legs) all the way up the face of the jump to project your body up into the air.

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As you take off it is important to realize that your body and the bike will want to travel in slightly different arcs with the arc of the bike naturally soaring higher than that of your body. You have to allow the bike to travel upwards towards your body by bending your arms and legs and drawing the bike up towards you.

If you keep your arms and legs stiff after you take off you will change the natural arc of the bike which may cause it to fall away from you in the air and result in your feet losing contact with the pedals.

Secondly, you can maintain contact with your pedals by creating tension between your pedals and handlebars. This is achieved by pointing your toes down slightly and dragging backwards on the pedals.



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Its important to note that you should not push back too hard, just a little should do it. A great way to practice this is by doing rear wheel lifts. While riding on flat ground compress down into your pedals and spring immediately back up. Allow your weight to come slightly forward as you spring up, point your toes down and push back slightly on the pedals as you draw your legs up towards you bringing the rear wheel off the ground.

Practice this until you can do it without pointing your toes down and you will be a long way towards knowing how to keep a connection with you pedals while in the air.

