

Beginner (Learning to Ride)

Ideal for riders who are brand new to biking or transitioning from strider bikes, training wheels or coaster brakes.

Riders at this level should:

- Be comfortable sitting on a bike and pushing with their feet, or just starting to pedal independently.
- Be learning how to balance while pedaling without training wheels.
- Use coaster brakes (pedal backward to stop) or be new to using hand brakes.
- Need coaching to start, stop, and stay balanced on flat, paved, or grassy areas.

Bike Requirements:

- A pedal bike with front and rear hand brakes. **No training wheels.**

Parents can expect their child to:

- Learn trail safety and etiquette.
 - Learn balance, steering, and braking skills.
 - Practice starting, stopping, and turning with control.
 - Transition from coaster to hand brakes.
 - Ride short and easy gravel or dirt trails.
 - Ride 1-3 miles a day or spend 30-60 minutes riding at an easy pace with frequent breaks.
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Novice (Beginner Trail Rider)

For riders who can ride independently and are ready to try single track trails.

Riders at this level should:

- Be able to ride independently on pavement or smooth dirt roads without training wheels.
- Can start and stop safely, and uses hand brakes to control speed
- Be learning to **shift gears** (or may be new to multi-speed bikes).
- Feel comfortable riding at a casual pace on mellow terrain (no steep climbs or descents).

Bike Requirements:

- A trail-capable bike with front and rear hand brakes. Bikes should have gears but do not need suspension.

Parents can expect their child to:

- Learn and practice trail safety and etiquette.
- Learn braking and body position for uneven terrain.

- Use shifting to adjust to terrain as needed.
 - Gain confidence riding on gentle dirt trails with small roots and rocks.
 - Ride 3–6 miles in a day or spend 1-2 hours riding at a relaxed pace, including stops for instruction and rest.
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Intermediate (Developing Trail Rider)

For riders with some mountain biking experience who are ready for more challenge.

Riders at this level should:

- Be comfortable riding singletrack trails with small rocks, roots, and moderate climbs/descents.
- Confidently use gears and brakes on varied terrain.
- Be able to stand on pedals and shift their weight to stay balanced over bumps or small obstacles.
- Have experience riding off-pavement (dirt or gravel paths)

Bike Requirements:

- A front suspension mountain bike or light weight full-suspension bike. Rim brakes or hydraulic disc brakes are appropriate.

Parents can expect their child to:

- Ride longer distances on a mix of smooth and technical trails.
 - Develop stronger control, cornering, and climbing/descending skills.
 - Work on endurance and trail awareness for **independent riding**.
 - Ride 6–12 miles per day or spend 2-3 hours per day with sustained effort on climbs and descents.
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Advanced (Confident Trail Rider)

For riders who regularly mountain bike and want to improve speed, flow, and technical ability.

Riders at this level should:

- Ride confidently on single track with rocks, roots, switchbacks, and steep sections.
- Use proper body position for descents, braking, and cornering at speed.
- Be able to lift wheels over obstacles and perform small controlled drops or jumps.
- Understand trail etiquette and be comfortable riding in varied trail conditions.

Bike Requirement:

- A modern mountain bike with front and rear suspension that has tubeless tires with aggressive tread. Brakes must be hydraulic disc brakes.

Parents can expect their child to:

- Tackle challenging terrain with instruction focused on skill progression.
 - Build independence and self management skills.
 - Explore varied features on longer, more remote trails.
 - Partake in group decision making regarding trail selection.
 - Cover 10–15 miles per day or spend 3–4 hours on the trail with limited breaks.
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Expert (Experienced Rider / Competitive or Expedition-Level)

For skilled and seasoned riders seeking big challenges, long distances, and technical mastery.

Riders at this level should:

- Consistently ride black or double-black trails with technical features, steep descents, or exposure.
- Confidently handle larger drops and jumps (1–3 feet), tight turns, and rough terrain at speed.
- Have strong self-management skills — pacing, hydration, trail repairs, and safety awareness.

Bike Requirements:

- A modern mountain bike with front and rear suspension that has tubeless tires with aggressive tread. **Brakes must be hydraulic disc brakes.** A dropper post is strongly recommended.

Parents can expect their child to:

- Ride independently and confidently on expert terrain with minimal instruction.
- Take on advanced challenges; sustained climbs, long-distance routes, or free ride features.
- Demonstrate leadership and advanced technique in group settings.
- Cover 20-25 miles per day or spend 4-6 hours riding with steep climbs, fast descents, and full-day adventures.