

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.