



Technical Climbing

*“It looms, resplendent in rocks and roots! Devoid of conscience, it beckons.
Your breathing shallows, your palms moisten. Your nemesis calls once again...”*

Will you ever conquer this climb? What will it take for you to join the ranks of those who clean technical uphill sections with ease? Technical uphill's are among the most demanding terrain you will encounter. On the upside, if you follow the techniques below you will dramatically improve your chances of success.

1. Rider Bike Connectivity:

When you ride, do you feel that the bike is a natural extension of yourself? Have you ever practiced such basic maneuvers as a wheelie, a front wheel stand, or a bunny hop? These and other techniques will allow you to better control your bike in all situations. Specifically for technical uphill's practice low speed front wheel lifts and steering your bike over and around obstacles. Also practice your ability to lift the rear wheel.

2. Momentum:

Physics 101 says that an object in motion tends to stay in motion until acted upon by an opposing force. Applied to technical uphill's the countering force is often the riders own mind, or the big gnarly rock that impedes your flow. Riders will slow down while approaching a technical climb believing that spinning an easy gear they will better control the bikes reactions. In reality keeping your speed and momentum up will make it much easier to clear the section. Try riding your most challenging uphill in a slightly bigger gear (ie 1-2 cogs) and at a little faster speed. See if you don't notice that you have more control and are less affected by obstacles, travel farther before losing it or don't lose it at all.

3. Over the Obstacle:

Similar to slow climbing is the novice riders approach to obstacles in the trail. “Ride around it, ride around it” the mind urges. The downside of doing that may be dramatically altering your line, losing your momentum, and increasing the number of decisions you have to make (substantially decreasing your likelihood of success). Instead try riding over the rock or root. Simply lift your front wheel, place it on top of the obstacle and continue with that line. As you progress start looking to use the obstacles as ramps to clear parts of the technical section or simply to avoid other obstacles in the trail.

4. Pick a Good Line:

How many times have you approached a technical section and gotten flustered by the sights in front of you? Instead try focusing strictly on the line you are riding. As you approach the section look ahead, notice where the cleanest line is and ride it. Use your front suspension to absorb the initial hits. Try riding to the outside of a technical corner. it is usually cleaner and less steep than the inside. Change your lines. The fastest route up a section is not necessarily the one everyone rides. It may be “uncool” but think motocross even on climbs.

5. Rear wheel traction and RPM:

Frequently it is a loss of traction that causes us to fail clearing a section. There are two primary components that affect this: Body Position and Pedal RPM. Body position is what keeps the rear wheel weighted and able to find traction. Don't be fooled into thinking that sitting all the way back on the saddle and trying to torque over the roots is always best. Instead try different body positions that allow you to manipulate the bike under you. Slide forward on the saddle for a little more front wheel Steer-ability and overall bike control. By the same token, spinning high RPM's is not the cure all to a technical section either. By using momentum and power in the right combination you will be able to ride sections a little faster and with more authority. A good rule of thumb is to always feel that you are on top of the gear. by this I mean you are always at the optimal power to rpm ratio. For most riders this will range between 70-90 RPM. Equally as important as leg speed is to keep your legs moving!! As soon as you stop pedaling you lose all your momentum.