

# Mountain Biking

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# Introduction

The chirp of the birds, zooming by great big trees, the smell of white pine and fresh air, the feeling of the wind blowing on you as you are ripping down a trail on your mountain bike. If this sounds exciting to you, then you should try mountain biking! Mountain biking is a super fun activity and sport where you ride your bike on trails.

In this text, I'll teach you about mountain biking equipment, types of bikes, riding surfaces, racing and teams!



# Chapter 1-Equipment

When you go mountain biking on a mountain biking trail, you need to dress correctly.

First, when you pick shorts, you'll need to think about the temperature and the style you want. You can pick skin-tight shorts that help with **AERODYNAMICS** or you can pick baggy shorts that look more casual, cover more of your legs, and are tough when you snag them on a branch. Biking shorts usually have a **CHAMOIS** (sham-ē) that helps pad you.

Also, you'll need a **JERSEY** that is either aerodynamic or a baggy jersey that is more casual. You should wear something that repels sweat and dries fast. According to "Mountain Biking for Beginners: Getting Started", it says, "You'll also want something you can wash and dry with little fuss. If you plan to carry a backpack, you won't need a lot of pockets-although some mountain bike jerseys offer that option."

You should also consider that a nice pair of gloves helps your hands; get some gloves with pads at the palm. Full-fingered gloves keep your hands warm and help with the grip on your brakes and shifters. And they help protect your hands if you crash.

Other important equipment includes a water bottle or a **CAMELBAK**, tools in case you need to repair something, good shoes, and a helmet. When you pick a helmet, you need to consider these things; a lot of venting and protection at the bottom back of your head. Shoes should have hard, protective toes, good grip, and be water resistant.



CAMELBAK



HELMET



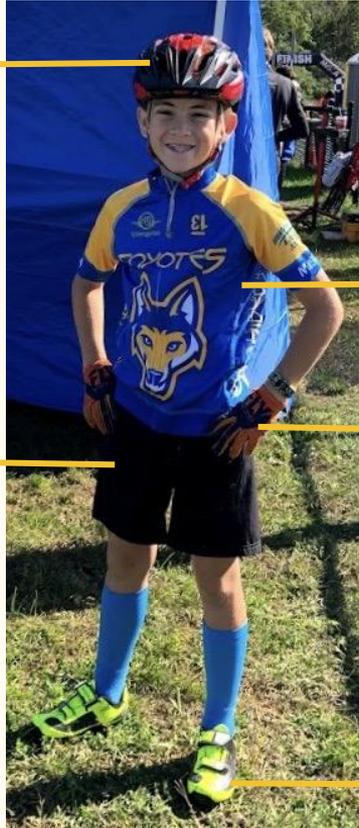
CLIP-IN MOUNTAIN  
BIKE SHOES



GLOVES

# Equipment

helmet



jersey

shorts

gloves

shoes

# Chapter 2-Riding Surfaces

When you go mountain biking, there are a few different types of riding surfaces called **TRAILS**.

Singletrack, which is the most popular trail type, can be as wide as your shoulders to wide enough for two mountain bikes to pass. A lot of singletrack trails are one-way or multi-directional by days of the week. When it's multi-directional by days of the week, you will see a sign that says certain days are certain directions.



RILEY TRAILS IS A MULTI-DIRECTIONAL TRAIL.

Doubletrack trails are usually two times the width of a singletrack trail with enough room for two mountain bikes to ride together.

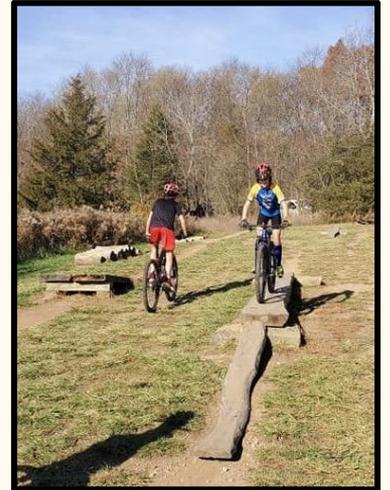
Mountain bike terrain parks are a new type of mountain bike trail that is becoming popular. They are indoor and outdoor parks that include big bridges, jumps, halfpipes, berms, banked corners, and downhill switchbacks.



Fat tire bikes on a doubletrack



Ray's Indoor Mountain Bike Park



Riding a balance beam

# Chapter 3-Types of Bikes

There are three different types of mountain bikes: rigid, hardtail and full-suspension.

“Rigid” mountain bikes are bikes that don’t have any suspension. Even though they are not hard to **MAINTAIN** and are normally cheaper, most people like bikes with suspension for more comfort. A lot of fat-tire bikes are “rigid”, and people think that wider tires and lower tire pressure gives padding to absorb bumps.

Hardtail bikes have a **SUSPENSION** fork in the front to help absorb bumps on the trail, but no suspension in the back - therefore a hardtail. Hardtails are usually cheaper than full-suspension bikes. Most hardtails can lock out the front fork when you want “rigid” suspension, are less expensive, and are easier to take care of. That makes them a good choice for almost all types of trails and riders.

A full-suspension bike has a suspension **FORK** in the front and **SHOCK** in the back to absorb the bumps of roots and rocks on the trail. This softens the bumps on the rider, helps with traction and control, and makes the ride more fun. Sometimes, full-suspension bikes can “bob” which means both the front fork and the back shock sink down at the same time and makes the rider lose energy and speed. Most full-suspension bikes can lock the back shock for more power and better climbing. Bikes that are made for downhill have a lot of movement in the suspension. But, bikes made for cross-country and all-mountain riding have less movement.



# Parts of A Bike



# Chapter 4-Racing

When you go to a mountain bike race, you will see other riders, a course, course marshals, a start and finish line, a podium, and medals.

One thing you will see at a mountain bike race is other riders. They could be on another team or they could be on your team. If you or other riders are not on a team you would be considered an “Independent Rider.”

Another thing you will see at a mountain bike race is a course. A course is sections of the trail with **COURSE MARKING TAPE** guiding you. Some sections of the trail might be taped off. That is because the **RACE DIRECTOR** doesn't want you going that way.

Also, you will see **COURSE MARSHALLS**. They are people who stand at parts of the course and make sure the riders are ok. Often they will stand at the more difficult parts of the course.

Something you will always see at a mountain bike race is a start and finish line that marks where the course starts and ends. At some races, they are timed. If there is timing, it is right at the start and finish. A really good timing company is Newton Timing. They put a timing chip in your number plate and the moment you cross the starting line, the timing starts. When you cross the finish line, the timing stops. This makes the timing exact and helps you get race results right away!

Something else you will see at a mountain bike race is a **PODIUM**. When you get 1st, 2nd, or 3rd you will get to stand on your place on the podium. When you stand on the podium, they hold a medal ceremony.

I have had an amazing experience with racing and hope you will too! One of my races is **MISCA** (Michigan Scholastic Cycling Association). It is super fun!



Race starting line



Race finish line



Racers on the MISCA podium.

# Chapter 5-Teams

If you want to race mountain bikes, I recommend joining a team. Here are some things a team has: a coach, rider levels, team equipment, and training time.

One thing a team has is a coach. A coach will help you train, work hard, and prepare for races. From a recent interview with Jeff Wert, coach of the West Michigan Coyotes Elementary team, he spoke about his three most important jobs.

During practice, he needs to be well organized and have a plan before each practice so the kids don't just stand there and wait. He also needs to be positive, upbeat, and be able to talk to all different types of riders. He makes sure the kids try new things and get into better shape for the races.

At races, he makes sure each kid is registered and ready, tells them about the start and finish of the course, gets them warmed up, makes sure each kid has food in them and is hydrated, cheers for them when they are out on the course, and congratulates them after the race.

At practice and races he makes sure the kids have fun, pushes them to work hard, and gives them tips. “My favorite thing about being a coach is riding with and teaching the kids.” says Jeff Wert.

Another thing a team has is rider levels. The levels are:

- Lower Elementary (1st - 3rd grade)
- Upper Elementary (4th -5th grade)
- Middle School (6th - 7th grade)
- Middle School Advanced (8th grade)
- Junior Varsity (9th - 10th grade)
- Varsity (11th - 12th grade)



Coach Jeff Wert

Sometimes you can be at a higher level if you are an advanced rider.

Something else a team has is team equipment. Team equipment includes: a tent, tools, extra bikes, and a bike rack. Sometimes the tent has the team symbol on the roof.

Lastly, a team has training time. This includes warm-ups, skill riding, trail riding, fun games, and riding on a trainer. Training time is made to help you stay fit!

I think the pros of being on a team are: you get to have fun with your teammates and you get to ride with others.

Riding on a team has been really beneficial for my riding skills. My team is the West Michigan Coyotes. They are a team that ranges from Lower Elementary (1st) to Varsity (12th). I hope you consider joining them!



# Conclusion

Mountain biking is an activity and sport with special equipment, different types of bikes, and different types of trails. If you want more information about racing and teams, check out: [miscabike.org](http://miscabike.org) for racing and [coyotesmtb.org](http://coyotesmtb.org) for teams.

I hope to see you out on the trail!



# Glossary

**AERODYNAMICS** -How air moves around something. If something is aerodynamic, it's not being slowed down by the wind.

**CAMELBAK** - A backpack with a pouch called a bladder that holds water.

**CHAMOIS** - Padding inside of mountain bike shorts.

**COURSE MARKING TAPE** - A plastic tape that marks a mountain bike race course.

**COURSE MARSHALL** - A person who stands at parts of the course and makes sure riders are safe.

**FORK** - The part of the bike that holds on the front wheel. It sometimes has a shock for suspension.

**JERSEY** - A special shirt used for cycling.

**MAINTAIN** - To take care of, clean, repair.

# Glossary Cont.

**PODIUM** – A raised platform where riders stand for a medal ceremony.

**RACE DIRECTOR** – A person who is in charge of a race.

**SHOCK** – A piston-like part of the bike that allows the tire to move up and down over bumps.

**SUSPENSION** – The set of shocks on a bike that softens the bumps on a trail.

# Bibliography

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