

## **Dropping – Introduction to drops on small to medium drops. (1 – 2 ft)**

**Why** – To improve safety, flow and efficiency on technical trails. Develop essential Position & Balance, Pressure Control and Timing skills that will be required as riders progress towards jumping.

### **Prerequisites before introducing drops:**

**Trails** – Students should be comfortable riding blue flow trails and most blue technical trails on the lower mountain showing relevant bike handling skills.

**Stick Test** – Students must be able to perform a front wheel lift over a stick at running speed and keep the front wheel in the air until the rear wheel has cleared the stick. This demonstrates the correct technique, skill level and timing required to be introduced to drops. The more time you spend practicing the stick test at various speeds, the greater the chances of success are when you move to the actual drop.

**Roll Downs** – Students comfortable doing roll downs.

- Show a good range of motion to maintain a stable position.
- Ability to lead the bike while absorbing the rear wheel.

**Essential Skills** – Ride with the students to assess the riding skills required for doing drops.

- Position & Balance – Rider should be able to adjust position to maintain a solid, stable stance through various terrain. Show a good range of motion.
- Pressure Control – Rider should be able to control pressure both passive and active.
- Timing & Coordination – Ability to pump rollers and “press” out of corners.

# Teaching Progression – Drops

## Stage 1: Area Intro, Drop Anatomy, Warm-up

All maneuver based lessons should start with an Area Intro. Highlight the traffic, route and which jumps are available to use. Describing the anatomy of the jump is important for safety and technical reasons. Using consistent terminology will help ensure the students understand your explanations and is a key part of your risk management.



POC. Point of commitment – point on the approach where the correct speed and stance for the drop should be attained. There should be no pedaling, braking or shifting of stance beyond this point. **Commit or abort.**

1. Approach – flat section of trail before the drop.
2. Lip – edge of drop.
3. Landing – where riders should aim to land both wheels.

### **Warm-up – POC, Roll Down**

After students have been introduced to the drop area, start by rolling down the drop. This will develop the rider's range of motion, Position & Balance, Pressure Control and Timing skills. It will also determine where the POC is and build confidence.

- Approach in a neutral position at a walking pace.

- Lead the front wheel down the drop by extending the arms and pushing the bike ahead of you down the drop.
- Absorb the rear wheel by flexing the legs until rear wheel passes the lip.
- Extend the legs as the rear wheel comes off the drop.

### Teaching Points

- Demonstrations should show a side view with an emphasis on the range of motion.
- Riders should show a strong lead, good timing and maintain a stable position throughout.
- Shoulders over the bars to better spot the landing.
- Be in control of the front wheel and to lead it down the drop.
- If rider is getting pitched forward:
  - Arms aren't extending → start lower for more range of motion
  - Legs aren't absorbing rear wheel → bend legs to control pressure
- Increase the speed so the roll down turns into a drop with both wheels landing at the same time.
- Watch the timing of the lead.
  - Too early → rear wheel hangs up on lip causing forward rotation.
  - Too late → front wheel falls off the lip causing hyper-extension of the arms and potential loss of balance.



### **Basic Drops – no larger than 2ft, slow to moderate speed**

Adding a press will help unweight the bike, keeping the bike more level as the front wheel leaves the drop. It also activates the rider's muscles so they can continue to lead the bike and absorb in a smooth, continuous motion. This subtle movement is often removed with more speed when the rider needs to minimize the air time to get the bike on the ground quicker.

Leading the bike by using the arms will help accelerate the bike off the lip of the drop. This will reduce the time difference between the two wheels leaving the drop. The shorter the time difference, the less time the front wheel has to drop before the rear wheel leaves the lip of the drop. This will reduce the bike "nose diving" making for a more level and controlled trajectory

through the air. To lead the bike efficiently, a rider needs to approach in a low position with bent elbows so they can extend their arms quickly.

Approach in a neutral position, passing POC.

Press the bike using the legs to unweight the wheels before lip.

Lead the bike (match angle of landing) with arms as front wheel leaves the lip.

Absorb rear wheel by bending knees to maintain stability.

Control bike trajectory to match the landing and land with both wheels simultaneously.



### Teaching Points

- Demonstrations should show a side view with an emphasis on the range of motion.
- Decrease the speed to develop technique and have a greater range of motion.
  - Faster → earlier and/or less press, less lead
  - Slower → later and/or more press, more lead
- Both wheel landing simultaneously.
- Increase the height of the drop → increase speed, decrease press
- Lead bike with arms maintaining a stable position. (not pushing feet forward)
- Focus on timing of the press and range of motion.
- Absorption happens at the same time as lead.
- Movements are smooth and quick, hands go out as hips go down.