

Bike Skills

Pedalling

Effective pedalling consists of pushing down on the pedals, as well as pulling up. The ankles should be used to maximize leverage, pushing down on the pedals to activate the calf muscles of the lower legs. In cycling *cadence* is the term used for the number of times your pedal turns around each minute. Commonly abbreviated as “*rpm*.” This is an important term/variable which helps you be more efficient while riding. Most cycling computers have cadence on them.

When pedalling on flat roads try to keep to a cadence of 90+ rpm. If you are able to do this, extend it further to 95+rpm.

While riding up hills in the seat, try to keep cadence above 80 rpm. Use your gears frequently to achieve this.



Handlebars

On road bikes there are 3 main hand positions. It is ideal to be able to use all 3 to take advantage of the benefits of each. Every ride, practice all 3 positions, with arms, and elbows relaxed.

The “*tops*” of your handlebars is the most comfortable riding position, and good for riding on flat roads or climbing hills when in the seat. The tops allow your back to be in a straight position, and for your lungs to properly inflate.

The “*drops*” of your handlebars are best used for:

- Cornering
- Descending
- Riding into head winds, as they decrease your frontal area into the wind, creating less resistance.



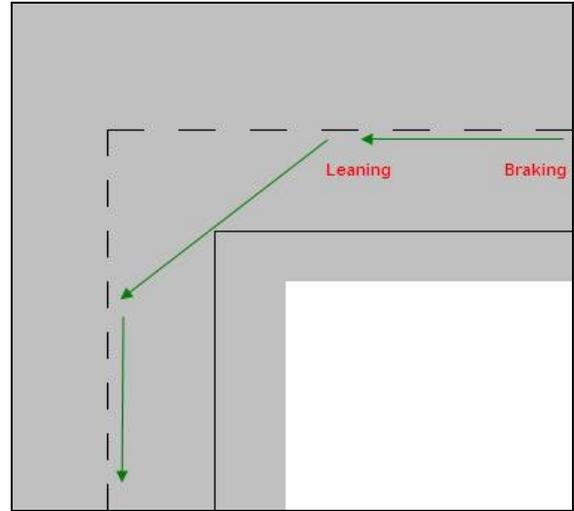
The “*brakehoods*” of your handlebars are good for climbing out of the seat, and riding on flat roads. However, they are secondary to the “*tops*” for riding seated up hills or on the flats, but have the benefit of allowing you to change gear or brake.



Cornering

Cornering is very simple once you know the basic pointers:

- Your bike will follow where your eyes are looking, so be sure to look where you intend to go!
- Take the corner as wide as possible (curb/white line) riding away from the corner, then lean with your hips and shoulders to the left/right (depending on whether you are turning left/right), and cut across the apex of the corner, and lastly head towards the curb/white line. So it is wide, apex, wide. Or essentially curb to curb to curb.
- Outside leg straight, inside leg bent.
- Put pressure on the outside leg pedal. The more pressure you put on this the faster you can go around the corner.
- If it's a sharp corner change down one gear so you can accelerate easily out of it.
- Handlebar drops are the easiest position to corner with as your, centre of body mass closer to the ground, allowing for more stability.
- Accelerate out of the corner either in or out of the seat, changing back to a harder gear, and get back into your pedalling rhythm.



Cornering in a bunch is safest on the inside of the bunch, as you can then determine the line you take.

Climbing

Seated climbing on gradual hills is best. Be sure to:

- Hands on the tops or brake hoods. The straight “tops” of your handlebars is best as you are higher, and this enables a straighter back position for improving pedalling, and breathing.
- A straight back is a strong back, as it is a stronger platform for your legs to lever off.
- Concentrate on smooth pedalling cycle, avoiding “thumping” the down stroke of the pedaling cycle.
- Ride an easy gear that you can spin a high cadence of 80+rpm
- Limit side to side upper body movement by contracting your abdominals, and keeping your back straight.
- Constantly look up the road 100+ metres.

Climbing out of the seat is best on steep hills. Be sure to:

- Straight back
 - Hips forward & straight
 - Always looking up
 - Pulling up through the pedalling cycle, (gravity takes care of downstroke)
 - Don't stop pedalling when you sit back down
- Alternate seated/standing practicing skills.

Descending

Riding down hills is cornering emphasized. It is best completed on the drops of your handlebars as your body weight/centre of gravity is closer to the ground, which improves stability.

Focus on:

- Curb to curb to curb.
- Looking ahead where you intend to go.
- Sit a little further back on your seat/shift weight back.
- Hands on the drops.
- Alternate straight/outside legs, as you turn left/right corners.
- Shift your body weight left left/right as appropriate.
- Gently brake continuously if it is a fast descent. In general try to avoid braking altogether, but if you have to, do so before the corners.