

# Trials Notebook

A monthly course in the art of trials riding.

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We're working on the assumption that many of you have to drive long distances to get to a practice area. Obviously, nothing will get you as fine-tuned as a regular program of getting out in the rocks and leaving streaks of side-case metal all over everything, but here's another practice that you can perform in the local vacant lot or in your back yard when the neighbors aren't home.

The idea here is to learn pinpoint lifts and pinpoint placement of the wheel when you set it back down. Note we said "set it back down," *not* "flop it back down with no control!" An overwhelming majority of rock sections require you to pick the front wheel up at one point and then bring it back to earth at an exact point on a precise line. You may be turning when you do this, so the technique is a powerful one, and very necessary to becoming an advanced rider. Besides that, it offers a dandy way to recycle old tiedown straps.

## STRAIGHT LINE

In our first set of pictures, Nick is working at a *low* wheelie. The idea is to pick up at point A, carry the front wheel close to the ground, and then set it down at point B. The markers are set about 10-12 feet apart. This mode keeps your forward speed up and happens a little quicker. An application of this technique would be crossing a gully or ditch, where you don't want the front wheel to catch and cause a bobble, and where extreme front wheel elevation is >

## LOW LIFT

### ONE

*Weight back, throttle rolled on slowly—just enough to keep front wheel 6 to 12 in. off the ground; eyes on touch-down point.*

### TWO

*Throttle rolled off, arms extend to gently push front end down—right on the money.*

## HIGH LIFT

*Weight was back for initial lift, now snapped forward to keep bike from looping and to counteract extreme torque necessary to keep the front wheel high. Note generous use of throttle. Forward position will be used as a fulcrum point when arms are extended for touchdown pressure.*

LOW LIFT ONE



LOW LIFT TWO



HIGH LIFT





## TURNING LIFT ONE



## TURNING LIFT

### ONE

*Front wheel turn was initiated with wheel still on the ground. Weight outside and on outside peg, bike leaned in.*

### TWO

*Throttle is rolled off; weight now forward, but outside; bike still leaned over.*

### THREE

*Weight now neutral front to back, more centered as Nick gets ready to straighten bike up for exit. Arms straightened to force front end down and take up landing jolt.*

## TURNING LIFT TWO



## TURNING LIFT THREE



## HIGH TURNING LIFT

### ONE

*Much more difficult. Weight is outside, but not as far back, as more engine torque is used for elevation.*

### TWO

*As in straight line lift, Nick now moves forward to avoid looping, and to start the bike down. Side-to-side weight placement is critical; here it's slightly to the outside. Too far out makes it difficult to straighten the bike out for landing, leaves you over-committed.*

### THREE

*Arms extended, slightly flexed for landing, weight back to leave room to absorb impact shock. Nick falls a hair short on this one.*

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unnecessary and unwanted.

The last shot in this sequence shows a high wheelie between the same markers. This is good practice for the sort of section where you have to go over a large log or rock and then hit a precise spot on the other side to avoid obstacles which would kick you off-line. Obviously this kind of practice does not give you any help on unweighting and throttle shut-off to help get the rear wheel over such a hazard, but *will* help you learn pin-point front wheel placement.

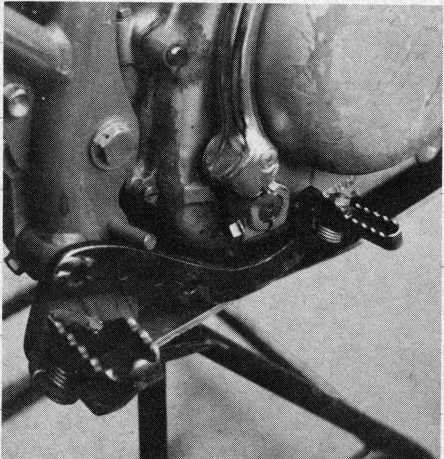
## HIGH TURNING LIFT ONE



## HIGH TURNING LIFT THREE



## FOLDING BRAKE LEVER



**Key Points:** 1. Again, practice with markers at different distances. 2. Front wheel is turned to *initiate* the turn (remember our slant log crossing lesson?). *Weight back and outside* to lighten the front wheel and lever the bike around. 4. *Bike leaned in* at start of turn and until you need to go straight; *then* the bike must be brought back to the vertical. 5. *Know where you're going after touchdown*; remember that you're learning this technique for application in sections, and may have to

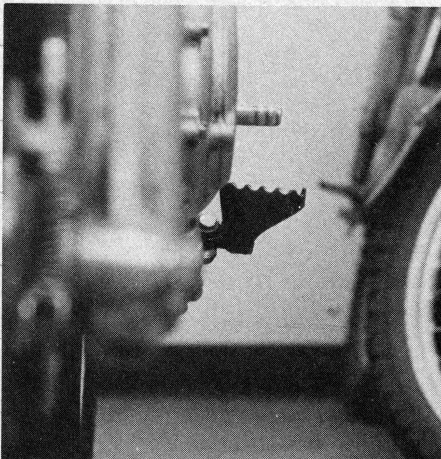
## HIGH TURNING LIFT TWO



## CIRCUS STUFF



## BOLT-ON HIGH PEGS



change direction or make another lift very quickly. 6. Practice both *low* and *high* lifts.

After you've learned these, then you can learn to ride in a circular wheelie like Nick is doing in the last shot; this will be a feature of future Honda exhibitions and schools. You too can be king of the parking lot!

## TECH TIPS

Take a look at Nick's new folding brake lever on the RTL300. The pivot, spring and stub pieces were borrowed from an accessory shift lever recently marketed for enduro applications. The major benefit is that the brake pedal may now be made large enough so that it's easy to find, but will fold if it connects with a rock. This keeps the pedal functional through an event, and also prevents impact from being transmitted to the transmission shifter shaft. Trick!

The second shot depicts another innovation: off-the-shelf higher footpegs. Nick discovered that pegs from the new Honda MR250 will bolt right onto the TL250 and the factory RTL300. Some minor grinding is necessary on the right-hand peg to avoid interference with the brake pedal. Other bikes undoubtedly can be found to make the same sort of interchange, and a cooperative parts man at your local dealer should be able to help. Don't hound him on Saturday afternoon, though, if you want to keep a friend! Advantages of this setup are more leverage, and an easier ride at your local event—most sections are set on bikes with standard pegs, so if the trialsmaster just barely cleared the rocks, you'll have an extra inch.

If you've been following this series and are still riding the same bike, it's probably time to replace your needle and needle jet; I'll bet they're worn! ☐

## CIRCUS STUFF

To continue this type of turn and ride around in a circle, Nick keeps throttle on, weight forward and body arched from outside in. Heavy throttle is necessary, but it must be blipped or feathered to maintain bike just ahead of balance point. A touch on the rear brake will prevent over-backwards ouchies.

## FOLDING BRAKE LEVER

Basic parts are available at your local enduro shop, require custom fitting to existing pedal stub and welding on of toothed self-cleaning loop made from strap iron.

## BOLT-ON HIGH PEGS

MR250 elevated peg bolts onto TL250, requires grinding on inside rear surface to clear brake lever on the right. Provides more leverage and foot clearance, but may feel funny the first ride.