

Learning and Riding Dirt Bikes

I remember the day my father bought me my first dirt bike. I was overwhelmed with excitement and couldn't wait to learn how to ride it. As soon as I got on, though, I realized that riding a motorcycle was much harder than I had expected. One of the first days I practiced, I rode around our backyard. At the time, we had no grass, which made it the perfect place to learn.

My brother rode alongside me on his own bike. He kept hitting a small dirt pile we had, launching himself into the air and landing it like it was nothing. Back then, getting air felt incredible—even if it was only three or four inches. Watching him do it over and over made me want to try for myself.

I didn't have much experience, and it showed. I hit the jump, landed, and immediately felt the bike wobble beneath me. Within seconds, I lost control and crashed. Pain shot through my hand as I hit the ground. My dad, who had been watching the whole time, came running toward me and asked if I was okay. I told him I was fine, but I needed a short break to cool down.

Over the next few days, with my dad's help, I kept riding. I crashed plenty more times, but each fall taught me something new. I was learning not just how to ride, but how to get back up when I fell—even when I was hurt or fighting back tears.

A couple of years later, I moved up to a bigger bike. I was no longer hesitant to hop on and go for a ride by myself. Bigger bikes, however, came with bigger challenges. The controls were more difficult, and I often found myself stopped on the side of the road, kicking the bike repeatedly to get it started again. My leg would get so tired it felt like it might give out.

I also had to learn how to use a clutch, something my first bike didn't have. I had to pull the clutch with my left hand, shift with my left foot, and control the throttle with my right hand—all at the same time. At first, it felt overwhelming. But with practice and patience, it slowly began to make sense. Eventually, shifting and stopping felt natural!

One day, my dad asked if I wanted to go on a ride with him in the mountains along with some of our friends. I was excited and immediately said yes!! He warned me that it would be a difficult ride, but by then I had learned that I could do hard things. I also knew that if I fell, I would get back up.

The ride was hard—much harder than I expected. The terrain was rough, and I fell more times than I could count. Every time I went down, my dad was there. He would jump off his bike and help me back on my feet before riding on again.

One of the scariest moments happened on a narrow goat trail carved into the side of the mountain. The trail was steep, forcing me to keep the bike in first gear and give it everything it had. To my left was a drop of at least five hundred feet. To my right was the mountain wall, covered in loose rocks. The trail itself was mostly dirt, which I was grateful for.

About halfway up, my front tire struck a small rock—one of the only rocks on the trail. The tire slipped off the edge, and the bike began to fall. I jumped off toward the safer side just in

time. The bike slid toward a lone bush growing among the rocks and, somehow, got caught before it could tumble down the mountain. That bush felt like a miracle.

I learned more that day than I ever had before. I learned how to stand up on the bike when the trail got rough and how to stay ready for the unexpected. Most importantly, I learned not to let fear stop me from trying.

Now that I'm older, I look back on those days with gratitude. Every fall, and every struggle taught me something valuable. Hard things have come, and will come again, but if I'm working toward something I care about, I know I will always get back up and keep trying!