

Biking Safety

The Hands-On-Care offers the following recommendations to maximize the enjoyment of mountain biking while minimizing the risk of injury.

1. Make sure your hands are properly warmed up before you begin your ride. Spread your hands and fingers wide and then ball them up into a fist. Repeat five times. Rotate your wrists five times in one direction, then five times in the alternate direction.



These exercises will keep your hands and wrists flexible and decrease the chances of muscle strain. Treat your hand and arm muscles like you would all

other muscles that need to be properly stretched prior to riding.

2. Make sure your bicycle is adjusted to fit you. The potential for stress injuries to your hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders are exacerbated when using equipment that doesn't fit well.

"...Drugs should be the last line of treatment.... We advise physicians to start with non pharmacologic treatments like therapy"
The Journal of American Heart Association.

For more information
www.HandsOnCareTherapy.com

Hands-on-Care



Specializing in Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist and Hand Therapy

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- To take the roughness out of your off road biking, a good suspension fork will absorb the shock for your upper body.
- Handlebars with an 8-10 degree sweep will place your wrists in a more efficient position for grasping. Straight bars force you to bend your wrists towards your thumb (radial deviation). Positioning in radial deviation weakens your grip and can place pressure at the base of your thumb, causing joint pain.
- Attaching bar ends to your handlebar will increase leverage for climbing and increase comfort for long distance riding. Bar ends with an L-bend will provide multiple hand positions that will decrease fatigue and numbness in the fingers. Ergonomic bar ends that are molded and made from hard rubber over an aluminum skeleton are now available.
- Changing your handlebar grips is easy and will only cost about \$10.00. Dual-density grips help decrease vibration and will conform to your hand better than thin or hard rubber grips. There is now an ergonomic hexagonal design available.
- Carbon fiber handlebars are sturdy and give a little during hard rides to provide vibration dampening for your upper

body.

- For a more upright position, you can choose a stem with a higher degree of rise or a riser handlebar. This will help relieve neck fatigue and decrease pressure on the palms of your hands. Most riser bars are available with ½ to 2 ½ " of rise. Be careful not to raise your handlebar much higher than your seat or you will be unable to maintain weight on your front tire when climbing hills.



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- Check the width of your handlebar. You may need to trim the length of your handlebar to fit your shoulder width. This will decrease arm fatigue and help you
- If you need to shorten your reach to your handlebar, replace your stem with a shorter one. Typical length is 90-140 mms.
- If you over inflate your tires, you will have a stiffer ride. For a more comfortable ride, keep your tire pressure between 35-45 lbs.

3. If you are getting pain or numbness in your hands, try examining an old pair of padded gloves. Look at the palm side of the glove and feel where the handlebar is placing the most pressure on your hands. The glove's padding will be more worn in these areas. If the padding is worn more where you have the pain, try a glove with padding that is thicker or a different design.

4. If you do injure yourself, be sure you see a hand medical doctor and get proper treatment – a small injury to the hand or arm can become a serious long-term disability if neglected. If you have a repetitive motion injury, have your doctor refer you to a hand therapist to keep you active without pain.

Mountain biking is an exciting sport that carries a certain amount of risk of injury. By understanding the effects of stress on the upper extremities and the prevention of stress-related injuries, riders can ensure their mountain biking adventures are safe and fun.

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