



IMBA Silver Level Ride Centre®



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Kids Bike Taupō Programme

***“Bringing bikes to the children of the Taupō District
to build a cycling culture”***

Getting Kids Riding On Two Wheels

1. Be a good role model and ride a bike, or be around people who do. Give your child the idea that this is fun and normal.
2. Start with a good quality balance/runner bike once your child can walk well and touch the ground when sitting on the bike. Trikes are OK to teach pedalling, but **avoid training wheels**. It is impossible to learn to ride on two wheels if you have four. The balance and momentum is all wrong. Training wheels are passive and make kids lazy and they do not develop the core strength needed to ride a bicycle. You need two wheels to ride the BMX Track, Pump Track or Dirt Jumps in Spa Park, and they are fun on a balance bike.
3. Wearing sensible shoes and clothes makes it easier. Have good, covered in shoes that fit properly and are secure. Double bow any laces. Grippy, rubber soles are better than slippery plastic gumboots or jandals. Wear tight fitting clothing that won't get stuck in the chain or wheels. Gloves are good, especially if it's cold. They protect hands when they fall too.
4. **Pump up the tyres!!** It's hard enough to learn to pedal as it is.
5. When the child is really comfortable on the balance bike, you can introduce a two wheeler. The bike needs to be small so the child can dominate it and have their feet firmly on the ground. It is a big mistake to buy a bike that they will grow into. Go to an open space like a school, park or safe driveway or cul-de-sac.

6. Sometimes a parent is better to step back and let someone else do this. Don't feel bad. Parents can be too connected and this is a big step towards independence. Use an older child or an enthusiastic whanau member or friend.
7. Begin by getting the child to run and gain momentum, taking their feet off the ground and freewheeling. When they master that, encourage them to pedal. You will probably need to run along beside for a few times. It is easier on concrete, but hard grass can give you lots of space. Using a hill can save your back! Pedalling is very sophisticated, so be patient. The best words to use are – “You can do this. You just need lots of practise.”
8. Talking about how to stop is important. At the beginning, just tell them to put their feet down nice and wide, so the pedals don't 'bite' their legs. Add the brakes when they have mastered starting by themselves.
9. If you are buying a bike, avoid cheap bikes from shops that do not specialise in bikes. A good, local bike shop that is run by people who know kids is the best place to go. Be wary of shops where the sale is the most important thing. Visit everyone and buy from someone you feel comfortable with. If you buy on price, then you will get what you pay for. Recycled bikes can be excellent. Check with friends who have older children. Kids Bike Taupō will happily advise.
10. Get a good quality helmet from a reputable, local bike shop that fits the child. It needs to have an adjustable wheel at the back. It is worn over the forehead, just above the eyebrows and when adjusted it won't wobble when the kid shakes their head. It should stay on their head when they tip forward, without the strap being done up. The chin strap should be secure under their chin, without being tight.
11. Get out on your bike too, or at least have some comfortable shoes to keep up. Kids riding bikes encourages adults to ride. Take water and/or ride to somewhere where they can refuel. Grandma's, friend's or to their favourite cafe. The Lion's Walk is a great place for a real ride. Craters Mountainbike Park has some easy tracks, but please get a membership from www.biketaupo.org.nz or at your local bike shop or at The Hub Cafe.

We are at the Taupō BMX Track in Crown Park, off Taharepa Road on Mondays from 3.30pm to 5pm. This is a great place to learn new skills and learn about style and flow on a bike. It is a free session, with the emphasis on skills not racing. We bring bikes and helmets. It helps if you bring your own, as it can be very busy. Covered shoes, gloves and long sleeves and pants is a good idea for when they fall.

You can help the Kids Bike Taupō Programme by donating used bikes or being a volunteer at sessions. We always need extra adults with these novices. Donations of money are always useful too. Visit our website or see the donation boxes at supporting businesses.

Kids Bike Taupō is passionate about getting kids riding early. Please feel free to talk to us if you need any help. We are happy to bring our bikes to your group/centre/school. We love to see the whole whanau on their bikes.

Contact us at kids@biketaupo.org.nz. You can also phone Cath Oldfield 027 280 4005