



- **Get loose.** Prepare to carve around tight corners and [ride over obstacles](#) such as roots and rocks by standing on your pedals, lifting your butt slightly above the seat, and keeping your elbows and knees bent to absorb any impacts.
- **Trust in MO.** On a [mountain bike](#), momentum—or mo—makes everything easier. Climbs feel shorter and rocks seem smaller. Try to maintain at least a fast walking pace, then speed up—instead of slowing down—before a challenging move.
- **Move your body.** Before a [steep climb](#), drop your elbows toward your hips and lower your chin over the handlebar for extra balance. On descents, you need stability: Level your pedals, move your elbows out, and slide your butt behind your saddle.
- **Shift, a lot.** Zoom into the elevation profile of a mountain bike trail and it might look like an EKG readout—you'll need to [shift frequently](#) to keep a good pace. Prepare for rapid undulations by keeping your fingers close to your shifters, and change gears prior to dips and spikes in the terrain.
- **Heads up.** As you ride, try looking at least 20 feet up the trail. This will give you time to choose the best path around (or over) hazards, shift if you need to, and get your body in the right position to tackle any obstacle.
- **Support yourself.** There are no convenience stores in the forest, and cell service can be spotty—leaving amenities behind is one of mountain biking's appeals. But be prepared: Carry at least a spare tube, pump, multi-tool, food, and water.