



TOP TIPS

THE RIGHT STANCE

Welcome to the first of MotoX's enduro help pages. Kiwi's Top Tips are just like Pro Daddy's Ride Better series, the only difference being that Pro Daddy's on side for the motocross dudes while Kiwi's yer man for enduro and cross-country. Over the coming issues Kiwi will cover all manner of advice for those who are setting out on the going for the first time, pretty much starting from first principles. We hope they help.

In this, the first Top Tip, Kiwi is looking at the standing riding stance. It's very much like the standing attack as motocrossers adopt but being that you'll be riding for hours at a time rather than just for a 15-minute moto, it's a little different.

It's worth adding that adopting the correct standing stance is fundamental to off-road riding as you'll typically be riding unseen terrain, with all manner of hazards awaiting. And standing on the bike not only helps by allowing you to read the track earlier (as you're sight-line is higher) but also allows you to react easily to the bike's often erratic movements.

In fact even more importantly, standing is the ultimate way to conserve energy, by letting the bike do all the work underneath you and allowing your legs and knees act as a form of suspension. You are then giving yourself an easier, more comfortable ride.

And, even more importantly still, the standing stance prevents monkey butt – the enduro rider's enemy. For those that don't know, or have never had it, monkey butt is the uncomfortable condition where sweat, dirt and rubbing create something of a seriously uncomfortable, if not to say unattractive, rash in the bum cleft.



This is the classic standing stance. You'll notice it's more relaxed than the motocrosser's standing attack. It's more upright and less aggressive, as in enduro you are looking to conserve energy and create the safest cruising attitude. The event can be up to eight hours if you're riding a national enduro so you want an all-day stance.

Top tip here is to have in mind the posture you might adopt waiting in a queue in a bank. Subconsciously we tend to bend our legs, but we keep a straight back, and we can stay comfortable for quite a period. That's what we do here too. The bent legs also help, as we said, to absorb the bumps. If you lock your legs out you take the jolts straight up your spine and you run the risk of hyper-extending your knees. By keeping your back as upright as you can you reduce the fatigue levels considerably.

Notice that my chin is in line with the top yoke and I'm looking far ahead, not at

my front mudguard, checking the trail. The further you look up a track the faster you can ride and the better you can plan your passage over the terrain.

I also have my knees lightly gripping the fuel tank, which helps to reduce the strain on my forearms. The leg muscles are far stronger and more durable than the arm muscles, so use them as much as you can.

Also note that I keep my feet level with my toes tucked in tight to the bike. Typically in cross-country you are riding through forests where stumps and rocks, often hidden, lie in wait. If your feet are left to point down, like a road rider adopts, there's a huge risk for broken toes, so keep them up and tucked in.

Elbows are also kept up, as this will enhance control. At first this will feel strange but over time you will appreciate the amount this helps with reacting to sudden steering deflections.



Here's a test to see if you've adopted the right position. As you can see I'm looking a bit odd in the opening shot. You can see I've got my legs too bent, my bum is too far out and my back is too angled – this will be very tiring. But typically beginner riders adopt this position thinking it's right, and not being able to see themselves don't know they've got it wrong.

So, to see if you've got the position right, with the bike on the stand (not riding, okay?) adopt your position and then let go of the handlebars. If you're in the wrong position you may fall forward or, more typically, fall backward, as I do here.

Rework your stance until you can take your hands off the bars and be standing quite relaxed.



Now it maybe you are struggling to achieve the standing stance. Taller riders, 5'10" and above will typically find standard bar and yoke settings leave them leaning forward too far.

In this instance you need to raise the bars toward your body. You can do this by buying a higher bend bar. But also, given that the standard bar bend is typically well suited to the bike, you can do this by custom made spacers under the bar clamps. These can come in different heights. Shown here are the 5mm spacers that I use on my Husky (and I'm only 5'8") and 10mm spacers used by one of my 6'0" tall customers on his KTM.

Beware you can go too far with spacers. If you are using spacers as high as 20mm you are going to find the bars will probably be too high when you're seated for cornering. It's a fine balance you need to strike.



Now even the top riders will sit from time to time, say on a long level straight like a firebreak road. But even then there's a right and a wrong way to sit.

This is the right way. My bum is toward the front of the saddle. My elbows are still up and again my head is up, looking right up the track. Again knees are gripping the tank and toes are tucked in (it's impossible to keep your toes entirely level in this position). In this stance you can relax a little, take something of a rest, but stay fairly in control should you hit an unseen hazard.



Okay that's enough for now. It may seem a simple point, but you would not believe how many riders get even this fundamental lesson wrong. And if you want to be competitive in enduros then you need to get it right.

Kiwi