

Mountain Biking Checklist

(Beginner and Intermediate)



THE TEN ESSENTIALS

1. **Navigation:** Trail Map, Compass (GPS optional)
2. **Hydration:** Water Bottles, Hydration Pack, and Treatment Method
3. **Nutrition:** Extra Food for emergency (extra nutrition bars)
4. **Sun Protection:** Sunscreen, Sunglasses, Hat, Lip Balm
5. **Insulation:** Hat and Gloves, Light weight jacket
6. **Safety:** Helmet, Pads, Bike Lamp
7. **Illumination:** Headlamp, Extra Batteries
8. **First Aid (for self and gear):** Bandages, Knife, Medicine, Bike tools etc
9. **Shelter:** *not applicable*
10. **Communication:** Whistle (For emergency signals)

Not all items listed will be needed on every trip. Pack only what you need and leave the rest.

BICYCLE GEAR

- Mountain Bike
- Helmet
- Two Water Bottles and carriers
- Small under seat tool bag
- Security lock (*if you plan to leave your bike for a mid-ride latte, blended juice, or snack*)
- Tire Pump or CO2 Cartridge/Inflator (*make sure it fits your valve: Presta or Schrader*)
- Spare Tube (*make sure it fits your tire*)
- Patch Kit (*for your tubes and tire*)
- Tire Levers
- Screwdriver
- Allen wrenches (2, 4, 5, 6mm)
- Chain tool and spare chain links
- Small crescent wrench
- Small first aid kit
- Small Hydration Pack
- Mountain Bike Clip Pedals (*optional*)
- Mountain Bike Shoes

CLOTHING

- Cycling Shorts
- Moisture Wicking Socks
- T-shirt OR a high-tech cycling jersey with the pockets for snacks
- Fleece, Polartec or wool sweater
- Cycling gloves
- Rain Jacket or Windbreaker

MISCELLANEOUS

- Wrap-style sunglasses
- Compass (*a mini one that mounts on the handlebars works just fine*)
- Heart-rate monitor and altimeter mounted on the handlebars, too
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Bandana
- High energy snacks
- Camera
- Cell Phone (for emergencies)

SAFETY CHECK

Before every trip, the rider should do a pre-ride safety check on their bike. This is very important because a good ride can turn into a nightmare if everything on the bike is not adjusted correctly:



1. **Checking the braking system:** Spin the wheels to make sure the brake pads are not rubbing on the rim or tire. Check the centering of the brakes making sure it has an even pull on both sides of the cantilevers. Make sure brake pads are tight by grabbing the brake pad and try to pivot it on the cantilever, also check brake post bolts making sure they are secured (5mm Allen wrench). Last take a look at the brake cables and housing to make sure there is no fraying or splits.
2. **Checking the headset:** The best way to check your headset (part that connects the handlebar stem to the frame) is by grabbing a handful of your front brake and rocking your bike back and forth. If there is any play or movement coming from around the headset area this will require an adjustment and tightening to the headset. Try not to ride on a loose headset because it can cause more damage to the bearings and bearing surfaces down the road.
3. **Checking the bottom bracket:** When checking your bottom bracket grab a hold of your crank arms, were the pedals are attached, and pull the crank arms side to side, if there is any play around the bottom bracket it should be adjusted immediately, if not this again can do damage to the bottom bracket cups, spindle or bearings. Also you should check your crank arm bolts to make sure they are secure, you will need either a 14 or 15mm crank arm wrench which usually cost around five to seven dollars.

4. **Checking The Hubs and Wheels:** To check and see if your hubs are loose with the wheels on the bike, grab the tire and move it side to side, it should have a solid feel, if it has any play it should be adjusted as soon as possible as again this can cause damage to the bearings and bearing surfaces down the road. For the actual wheel to be ride-able the spokes should have an even tension throughout. To check the tension on the spokes grab two spokes on the same side of the wheel and pull them towards each other, they should have an even tension. Go through all the spokes in that process, if there are any loose spokes the wheel should be looked over by a mechanic to see what is wrong. If there is more than three loose spokes on the wheel I would recommend not riding it.
5. **Checking Allen Bolts:** This will require you to have available 4, 5, and 6mm Allen wrenches. Go around to all bolts that have hex inserts in them (i.e., handlebar stem bolt, stem binder bolt, derailleur, brake levers, shift levers, cantilevers water bottle cages, and seat binder bolt) and use your Allen wrenches to tighten them. **Do not over tighten**, this can sometimes cause stripping of the threads.
6. **Frame Inspection:** This is very important to do because a broken frame is a dangerous frame for riding on. Look for any type of cracking in the paint were the tubes join together. This is not a usual occurrence but is something you should keep an eye on.

TEN RESPONSIBLE RIDING TIPS FROM IMBA/REI:

1. **Be Prepared:** Know your equipment, your ability, the weather, and the area you are riding in to prepare accordingly. A well-planned ride will make all the difference.
2. **Don't Ride On Closed Trails:** Whether it is to protect the environment or for rider safety, a closed trail is off limits for a reason. Riding closed trails is not only illegal; it gives mountain bikers a bad reputation.
3. **Say No To Mud:** Riding a muddy trail can cause unnecessary trail widening and erosion that may lead to long-lasting damage.
4. **Respect the Trail, Wildlife and Environment:** Be sensitive to the trail and its surroundings by riding softly and never skidding. Do not litter and never scare animals.
5. **Stay On the Trail:** Riding off trail can damage the ecosystem. Never cut switchbacks.
6. **Ride Slowly On Crowded Trails:** Just like a busy highway, when trails are crowded you must move slowly to ensure safety for all trail users.
7. **Pass With Courtesy and Care:** Slow down when approaching other trail users and respectfully make others aware you are approaching. Pass with care and be prepared to stop if necessary.
8. **Share the Trail With Other Trail Users:** Mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians must share multi-use trails. Remember: mountain bikers should yield to hikers and equestrians.
9. **Don't Do Unauthorized Trail work:** Unauthorized or illegal trail work may lead to environmental damage, injury or even potential trail closure.
10. **Get Involved:** If you want to make a difference in your mountain biking community get involved with a local club, Visit: imba.com to find a club in your area.

** Local Notes: Your local Nashville club is SORBA Middle TN. You can find more info on the message board at nashvillemountainbike.com*