

# Jumping 101

Well, this is a great topic. First, a few disclaimers: What I write is in my opinion both practical and philosophical. It is arguable. It is what works for me, my son, local riders, and many pros as well. It may not be what others teach or what others want. But it's my philosophical work and it works.

As a kid, jumping was everything to me and my friends. Growing up in the farm belt of Michigan, life was, well, boring. Jumping gravel pits and banks was all we did on our Honda XR-75's and early YZ-100's. Jumping in races was where we tried to make time back then as the tracks were rough and suspensions ill-equipped. Air was smooth, the longer we jumped it seemed the further we got ahead. Not really, but for kids it seemed to work.

For us on this side of Ricky C. and Bubba:

- 1) The landing of a jump is only as good as your take off.
- 2) **BODY POSITION:** Being forward on your bike up the ramp is critical. You **HAVE** to lead your bike. Especially in the air. Stay forward with your head and shoulders! Keep your torso right over vertical to the bike's pegs. Do not hang your butt over the rear fender to counter your weight to lift the bike's front end up! There will be times I will be back. It is a hard habit to break. Old style is old and out of date . . . if a rider has to transfer weight too far back to bring up the front end, they didn't give the bike enough power off the face of the jump. We want a centralized weight distribution. Head and shoulders leading the bike being over-in-front of the bars butt and torso over the tank and a little (first 1/3) of the seat. If your rider is leading the bike and is balanced, the landing is simple and natural. And, bonus, he can do a lot more with the bike in the air.
- 3) **POWER:** Too much gas is like too much weight to the rear of the bike. Front wheel too high = out of control. Can you save it? Sure. Let's not go there now.
- 4) **Letting OFF:** Too little gas off the face AND/OR not extending your legs and not getting good shock compression = rear wheel too high = out of control.
- 5) **Landing:** Landings should be square not leaning and rolling the throttle on with a single speed, gas on and feeding the clutch as the rear wheel digs in.

**Fixing landings is easy.**

- **First identify what the issues are.**

## **Landing front wheel?**

Is he transferring a lot of weight forward at the end of the flight arc?

If so, why? Is the front tire always nose down?

Get his body position correct on the ramp, teach him **proper power off the ramp** to keep the front end at a manageable height use weight transfer in the air to trim out the bike level at the end of the arc so that the rear wheel just touches b4 the front wheel on landing.

- **Landing rear too much on the rear wheel with the front end way up?**

Again, is his/her weight too far back? If so, why? Remember stay forward..Lead the bike. Too much power on takeoff? **Work on grip positioning** so that the rider understands how to finesse the throttle. Remember the door knob theory? Thumb and forefinger only. Legs need to be slightly bent on the ramp but just slightly. Forward, forward, forward. Start slow and build up. They master this stuff in 2-3 tops. Some kids are much faster. So what. Worry about

### **Helping Kids Correct:**

I cannot stress enough how wonderful video is. Taping is a great way to take your time and look carefully at what your child is doing.

Patience. Please be patient with your kids. I have pins in my back and knots in my collar bones from missing jumps. I surely do not want my most precious gift in life to end up like that!

Make every riding day an adventure and a fun experience. Practice jumps like target practicing with a gun or rifle.

### **Express the importance of safety first always! Safety means:**

- Learn on tabletops. Get Great on tabletops.
- Time up gap jumps.
- Commit only when past ready
- Straight front to back/side to side
- Never ever push unless you KNOW he or she can do it and is ready!