



A TORCA BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO MOUNTAIN BIKING IN THE TRI-CITIES

*Information on the best beginner trails in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and
Port Moody, plus tips on trail etiquette and basic skills for new riders*



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THE BEST TRAILS FOR BEGINNERS IN THE TRI-CITIES

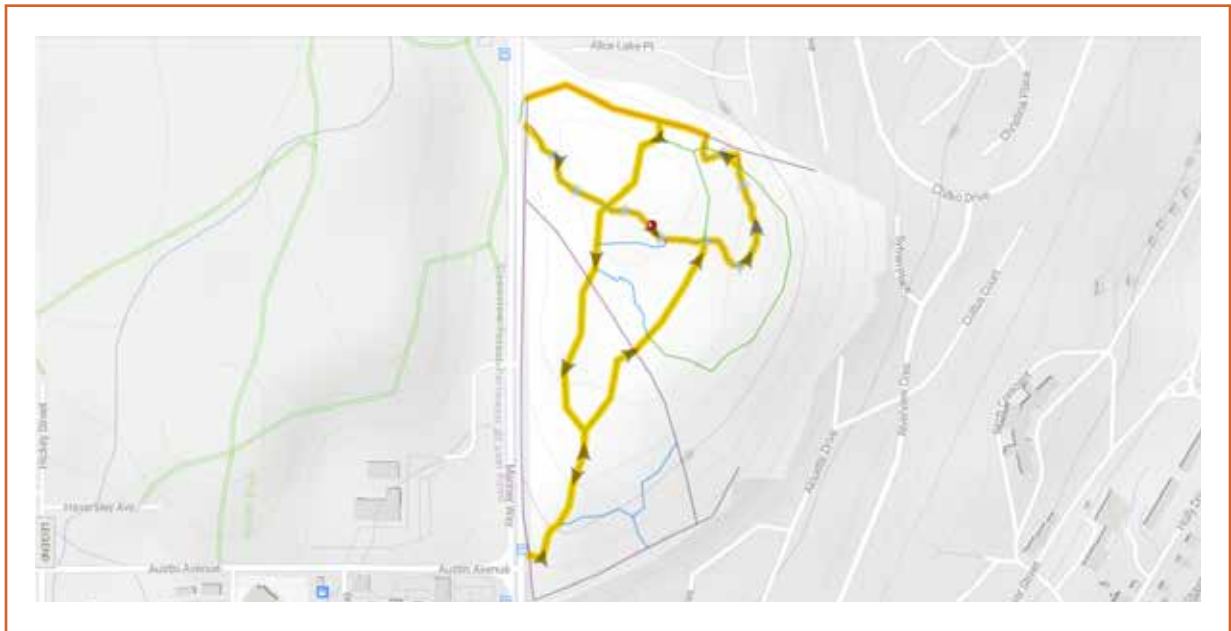
The beautiful forests, parks and mountains that surround Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody contain a wealth of trails for mountain bike riders of all levels. Here are the best sites for people who are just discovering this exciting sport—starting with beginner-level areas and advancing to trails that can help build your skills. In no time, you'll be hooked for life!

RIVERVIEW FOREST

This Coquitlam park on Mariner Way has a wide variety of terrain, making it perfect for beginner riders and those who like cross-country trails. Multiple trails connect together over 60 acres of parkland, making for a huge playground where you can spend leisurely hours riding and exploring the well-graded pathways and taking in some nature at a relaxed pace. This is also a great spot to safely develop your mountain biking skills—in fact, the Mundy Bike Skills Park, right across from the forest entrance on Mariner Way, is a great place to practice some basics before you even hit the trails.

(See page **11** for our top tips on learning basic skills!)

Try the Riverview Forest Beginner Loop:



Access this loop in Trailforks by clicking [here](#).

How to Find It

Access the trails from the entrance at 501 Mariner Way in Coquitlam. Parking can be found on Chilko Drive and at 626 Mariner Way in Coquitlam.

BERT FLINN PARK

A scenic park in Port Moody often used by locals for short, easy nature walks, Bert Flinn Park is another great option if you're new to riding. This park features lots of easy to moderate single-track trails, with some roots and other beginner features here and there for you to practice on and progress your skills. Most trails are well marked, making the park simple to navigate. Keep a sharp eye out and you might spot an elusive barred owl!

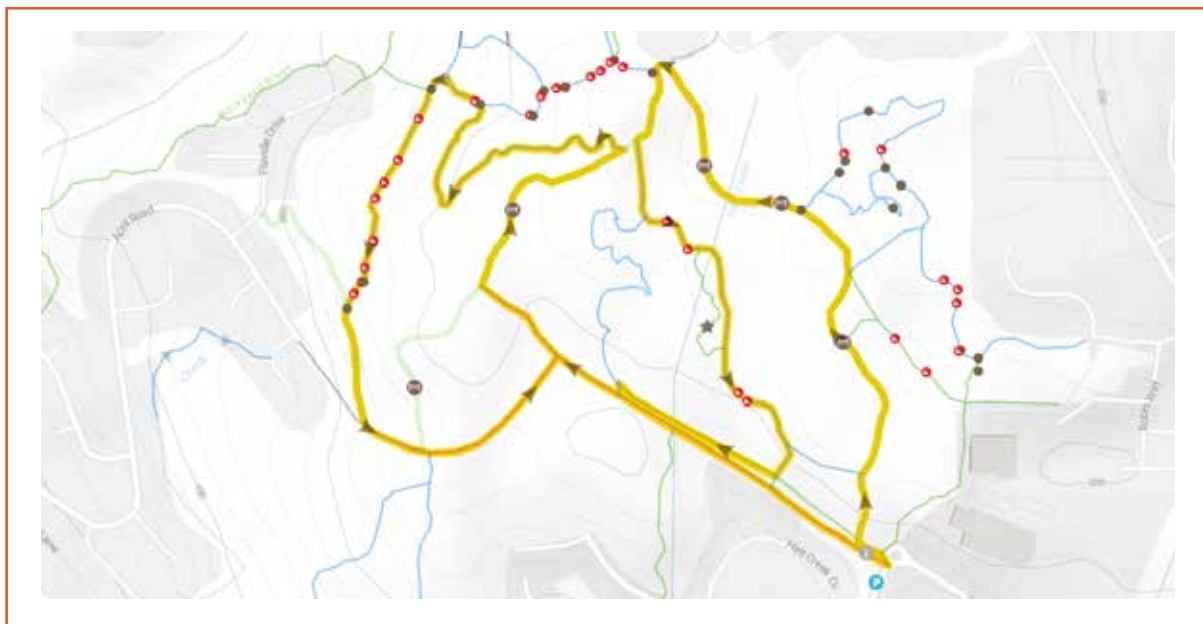
WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #1

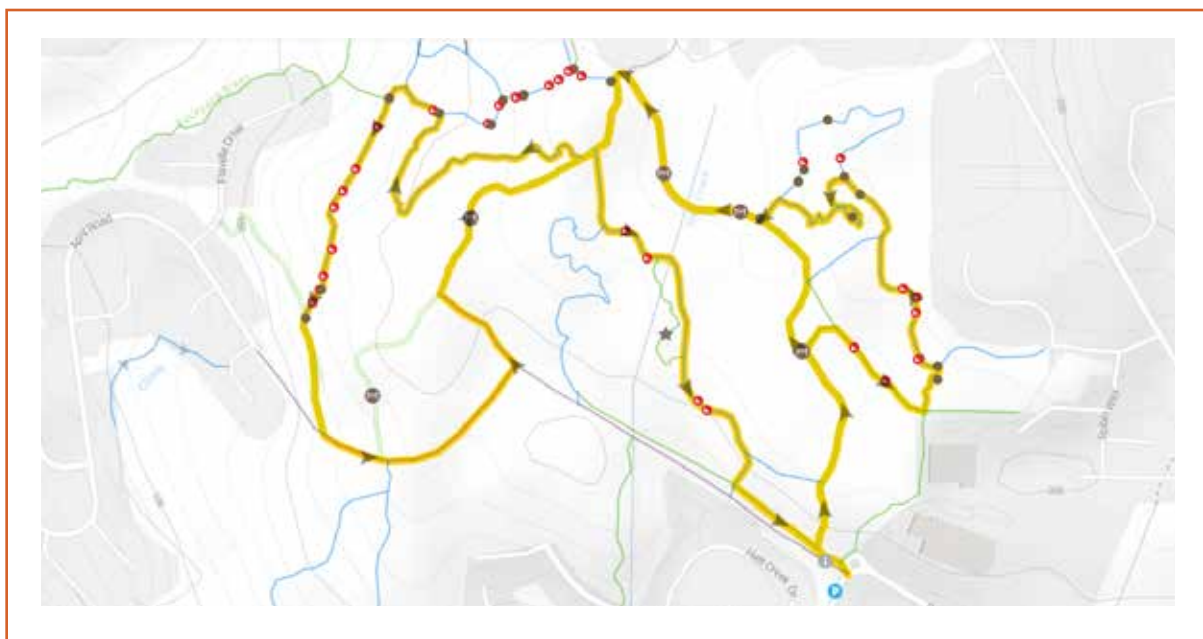
You'll be connected to a group of like-minded individuals who care about the future of mountain biking in the Tri-Cities.

[join now](#)

Here are two beginner loops to try:



Access this loop in Trailforks by clicking [here](#).



Access this loop in Trailforks by clicking [here](#).

How to Find It

Access the trails at the end of David Avenue and top of Heritage Mountain Boulevard in Port Moody. Parking can be found at the top of Heritage Mountain Boulevard.

PINECONE BURKE PROVINCIAL PARK

Rising up from the north side of Coquitlam, this park—known to locals simply as Burke Mountain—is a worthy next step once you’re getting comfortable with riding and want to take it further. There are plenty of intermediate trails (and even advanced, if you’re ready to challenge yourself!), so it’s a great place to get familiar with riding sections that have a few more roots and technical features. You can find a lot of intermediate (called “blue”) trails on the lower half of the mountain, with endpoints on the Coquitlam River and on Harper Road.

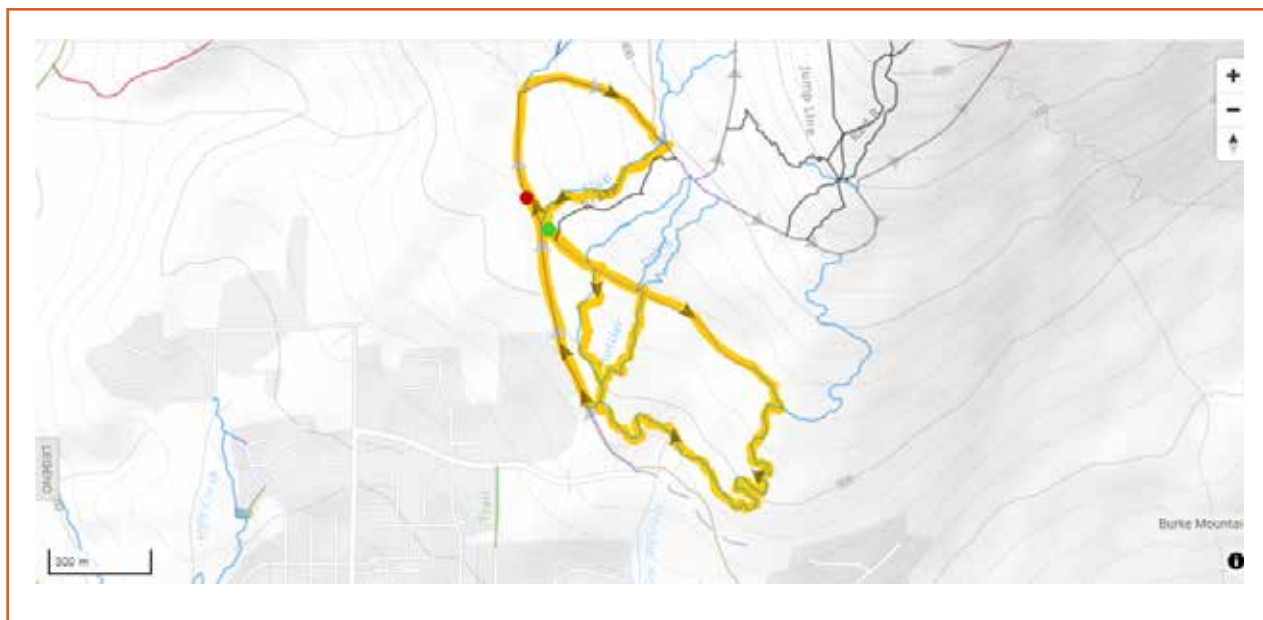
WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #2

You’ll get access to discounts at many of our partner businesses.

[join now](#)

Try the 6.7-km Burke Mountain Loop:



Access this loop in Trailforks by clicking [here](#).

How to Find It

Access the trails from the top of Harper Access Road. Parking can be found on Harper Road at Conifer Road (the green gate) or at the top of Harper Road by the yellow gate.

DID YOU KNOW?

TORCA is actively advocating for a mountain bike strategy to be included in the new management plan currently being developed for Burke Mountain by BC Parks.

EAGLE MOUNTAIN

This is definitely a place for more advanced riders—Eagle Mountain is where you go when you're ready to put your skills to the test! But stay tuned, because plans for intermediate-level trails are in the works. Meanwhile, if you're going for the first time, consider teaming up with someone who is familiar with navigating the area—like a guide, a riding instructor or a friend who is more advanced.

Check out [trailforks.com](https://www.trailforks.com) for several trail options.

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #3

Your membership dues will help sustain our thriving trail-building fund, so we can buy the equipment we need to maintain and improve the trail network we all use and love.

[join now](#)

FAMILY-FRIENDLY SKILLS PARKS

Bike skills parks are a great place for adults and kids to develop riding skills in a safe and welcoming space. You and your kids can test out some basic obstacles, including log rides, ramped log crossings, step bridges, ladder decks, rock boxes and teeter totters—all designed to help you get started at an entry level. Mastering a few basic techniques at a Tri-Cities skills park will help your whole family gain confidence, and get you ready to take on a wider range of trails on the mountain!

MUNDY PARK BIKE SKILLS TRAIL

Off Mariner Way, Coquitlam

LEIGH PARK SKILLS PARK

3432 Roxton Avenue, Coquitlam

SHAUGHNESSY BIKE PARK

3400 Shaughnessy Street, Port Coquitlam

12 KEY SKILLS FOR NEW RIDERS

There's more to a successful and exhilarating mountain bike ride than just getting on a bike and rolling down a hill. Spend some time developing these basic skills on easier trails or even just in a local park, and you'll be ready to take on more challenging runs in no time!

I. THE NEUTRAL POSITION

How you hold your body on the bike is important in riding. The neutral position is your most relaxed stance: your pedals are level with each other, with one foot forward and one foot back. This position helps you translate your weight evenly through your bike.

PRO TIP

Keeping your pedals level is how you gain power and stability. It also helps you avoid strikes from roots and rocks.

GET OFF YOUR SEAT

Position the seat of your bike so that it is low and out of the way—then stay off it! Keep your body up as much as possible. The only time you should be on your seat is when you are climbing.

2. THE READY POSITION

This is the go-to position in mountain biking. The ready position allows your bike to move smoothly underneath you. It also ensures that all of your contact points are even, and it keeps your weight balanced so you can ride features with control and stability.

To master the ready position, keep your pedals level, and your legs and knees out (think bowlegged, like a classic cowboy or cowgirl). Your arms are down, with your elbows out like you're doing a pushup. Keep your chin down toward your handlebars and your body close to the bike.

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #4

You'll take part in events like our Trail Days and our annual AGM. It's a super fun way to meet and connect with other passionate mountain bikers in your community.

[join now](#)

3. BRAKING

Developing good braking skills is your first priority—this is how you stay in control. Most of your stopping power comes from your front brake, but you need to use your back brake for full control. Modulation of your back and front brakes is the key. Remember to slightly shift your weight backward from the ready position (see #2) when braking.

PRO TIP

To practice braking, find features that are steeper and try to go down them in a slow and controlled way, using your front brake to control your speed and staying in the ready position (see #2). If you feel yourself going over the bars, let go of your brake—your back wheel will drop and you can brake again.

4. FORE AND AFT MOVEMENT

This is the term we use for moving your bike forward and backward. Use this type of movement when you're going up and down and features. Pay attention to how your bike moves under you, and get to know it intuitively: this will help you take more control of the bike and trail. The more intuitive you become about your bike's actions, the more you are acting, and the less you are reacting. This means you get bumped around a lot less!

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #5

The larger our membership, the more clout we have when negotiating with land managers or applying for grants for events, trails, education and more.

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5. LATERAL MOVEMENT

This position is great for riding on narrow things, such as footbridges and logs. It's also great for cornering. Learning how to move your bike laterally (left and right, rather than forward and backward) helps you maintain balance without tipping over. Get in the ready position, with level pedals, and move your arms left and right. Think of windshield wipers as you move the bike from side to side under you.

REMEMBER

The climb never gets easier. You just get faster.

6. GEARING

Learn how to shift smoothly so you don't stretch your chain and break it. Use a powerstroke (pedalling harder on the downstroke) as you're climbing to get momentum, then, at the same time, do your shifting—this is called a “soft pedal shift,” and it helps you avoid stretching your chain. (A stretched chain means you need to change it, and the cassette, so save your money and shift carefully!)

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #6

The more accurately we represent the number of mountain bikers in the Tri-Cities, the better we can ensure that all local mountain bikers have access to the appropriate resources.

[join now](#)

7. CLIMBING

Everything that goes down has to start by going up! But don't be intimidated—just take it slow and steady, and use an easier (lower) gear. For long, not-so-steep and non-technical climbs, adjust your seat to the proper height for your body, and stay seated. Keep your elbows in and your wrists down, tilt at your waist, and be in a gear that's not too easy or too hard. If you need a quick burst of power, stand up.

PRO TIP

Make sure you lock your shocks so that you don't waste any energy on the climb... unless you really want to work your legs!

A simple trick for choosing the right seat height is to set your seat at the top of your hip bone.

8. DESCENDING

This is the fast and fun part! Set your seat low and out of the way, and put yourself in the ready position (see #2)—this will keep you stable and balanced. As you start to roll, feel the bike fall away and move forward with the slope. Don't death-grip your brakes—instead, “feather” them, using light taps to maintain the speed you want. Remember to move your bike and your body together to use the terrain to your advantage. One more thing: learning how to do a proper wheel lift (see next point) will help you maintain the momentum in your ride.

PRO TIP

Remember how you locked your shocks to go up? Do the opposite here: make sure your shocks are unlocked before you start descending, or you're in for a bumpy ride!

9. WHEEL LIFTS

Getting your wheels off the ground helps you move up and over obstacles smoothly, or even avoid them completely. As you expand your skills, they're also what you'll be using to do bunny hops and other advanced moves. There are four basic wheel lifts: front wheel, rear wheel, level wheel and the basic pedal lift. The trick for all is to use your own body weight, though you'll be doing so in different ways for each. Watch the YouTube video at the link below for a demonstration, then practice what you watched in a flat area, using small sticks or rocks as obstacles to get over.

[watch video](#)

SESSION IT!

“Sessioning” in mountain biking is repeating a trail, a section of trail, or passage over a single obstacle again and again until you've mastered it. Sessioning is a critical part of gaining good mountain biking skills. Practice may not always make “perfect”—but it definitely makes for more fun on the trails!

10. CORNERING

Cornering skills help you get around tight turns efficiently as you go down the hill. The more confident you get, the more you can corner with speed. As you come toward a corner, get into your ready position and brake before you reach the corner (just like with highway driving), then let go of the brakes as soon as you enter and just let the bike flow. Turn your hips into the corner as you move through the entrance, the apex (the peak of the turn) and the exit. Learn to move your eyes, your hips and your belly button as you flow through.

PRO TIP

The key with cornering is to look ahead. Like, way ahead. Constantly, constantly look ahead.

II. LINE SELECTION

Remember the tip you just read about looking ahead? Another reason to do this is to create (as you go!) a deliberate strategy for how you're going to move through the various elements of the path in front of you: turns, roots, rocks, low branches, logs, stretches of mud, dips, climbs—even pedestrians, dogs, deer! If you're always looking down at your front wheel, these obstacles are going to come as a surprise, and you're not going to have a smooth ride. So, pick your line: keep your eyes at least 10 feet ahead of you, examine the lay of the path, visualize where you're going to go, then act on that vision. Always be scanning well ahead, then scanning back to nearer distances, rather than staying fixated on one distance. The more experienced you get, the more intuitive line selection will become.

HOW TO RIDE IN THE WET

A big part of safe riding in wet weather is learning to identify which trails are fun to ride in the rain, and which are best left for dry days. Things like soil type, steepness and restrictions on specific trails can all help you make a decision about whether to tackle a muddy trail. For more tips and tricks on riding during our frequent rainy West Coast days, [click here.](#)

12. ROLL DOWN LUNGE

This skill is important for steep descents with lots of roots and rocks. It involves keeping the front wheel down to keep it in contact with the ground as much as possible. The trick is to go slow, keep low and pay attention to the terrain. From your ready position, lunge the bike by pushing down as the front tire goes over the edge, extending your arms to ensure that the front tire maintains contact with the ground at all times. Never brake while in the middle of a lunge—wait until your rear wheel has rolled over the obstacle, then get back into the ready position and brake. Success in this move is about confidence: finding and embracing that “moment of commitment.”

REMEMBER

There is no shame in walking. If you're unsure of a feature, get off your bike and take a look at it. Then walk it, “session” it or do it another day.

MOUNTAIN BIKE ETIQUETTE

Here are a few tips to help you make sure you are protecting and respecting the trails, the environment and all the other people who use our trails.

RULE #1: BE PREPARED

The more you know about the trail, the weather and your own ability level, the more fun you're going to have. Before you go, check [Trailforks.com](https://www.trailforks.com) for a description of the trail you plan to ride, so you can see the rating and the difficulty level. Most trail descriptions even lay out some of the features you might encounter, so you can prepare to tackle them or walk them, as you see fit. (Trailforks.com will also help you find out if a route is too steep or difficult to walk, so you can skip that trail altogether if you don't feel up to it.)

Knowing the trail will also help you ride on your level—staying within your ability to stop for unexpected branches, trees, animals or other riders. Also: dress for the weather, and let someone know your plans before you head out. This will greatly reduce the chances of you having a bad day!

RULE #2: RESPECT OTHER TRAIL USERS

The trails around the Tri-Cities are used a lot: by other mountain bikers, as well as by hikers, families, dog walkers and so on. These few steps will make sure everyone can have a good time on the paths.

- Yield at every intersection and check for oncoming users.
- If you're moving downhill, yield to bikers and non-bikers who are moving uphill.
- If someone is coming up behind you on a downhill trail, keep going until it's safe for you to move over. No need to jam on the brakes and get out of the way. You have the right of way.
- If you're in a group, let the people you pass know how many are coming behind you.
- Another good group-riding practice is to pause at every intersection so the person behind you can catch up—that way, no one gets left behind!
- Don't trespass on private land—get a permit or other required authorization.

RULE #3: PROTECT OUR PARKS AND TRAILS

All of our local trails were designed by trailbuilders to help prevent environmental damage. Making any changes to a trail alters the way water flows around it, which can wreck the trail and the entire area. Here are a few steps you can take to help preserve our trails, preserve our environment, and respect the work of the people who manage both.

- Stay on the trail! Riding on the sides or carving new paths does more damage than you know.
- Do not “braid” the trail (cutting across a switchback or turn as a shortcut).
- If a section is too difficult, get off and walk the trail rather than cut around it.
- If you see a low spot in the trail that is collecting water (called a “drain”), feel free to kick out any debris to let the water run out. But DO NOT make alterations like placing rocks or building structures.

- Avoid skidding—it damages the trail, creating water pathways that carve trenches.
- Muddy trails are vulnerable to damage—consider other options if a trail is soft or wet. Every piece of dirt that ends up on you is removed from the trail, and will need to be replaced.
- Pack out everything you pack in, especially when it comes to tire changes and tubes. (Your old tubes are not tree ornaments!) If you see someone else’s garbage, feel free to pack it out too.
- Respect trail and road closures—if you’re unsure, check [Trailforks.com](https://www.trailforks.com) or contact [TORCA](https://www.torca.org). If a trail is closed, there will be either a sign at the trailhead or a notice on Trailforks.
- Respect wildlife. Never frighten or harass animals. Give any animals you see room and be prepared to change your trail choice. If you’re riding alone, attach a bear bell to your bike.

What If I Meet a Bear?

The mountains around the Tri-Cities are full of life, and encounters with wild animals of all kinds are common—including occasional meetings with bears and cougars. This can be an amazing B.C. experience, but it also means you need to take some basic steps to ensure that both you and our local wildlife stay safe.

If you encounter a bear, stop, stay calm and speak to the bear in an easy, firm voice. Slowly start backing away, keeping your bike between you and the animal. Give the bear enough room to leave on its own (it likely wants to get out of the situation as much as you do).

For cougars, get large: lift your arms, yell, make noise, shake your bike and make eye contact—in short, try to intimidate it. Do this, and it will typically run away. In addition, back away from the cougar, throwing rocks at it if necessary to keep it away. Never turn your back on a cougar, or run.

For more on what to do in a wildlife encounter, [check out this article.](#)

A HAT TIP TO OUR TRAILBUILDERS

The trails we love were built by people—and they’re maintained by people too. Most of the trails in the Tri-Cities were created to meet [IMBA](#) and [Whistler trail standards](#), which means they are able to withstand bad weather and heavy traffic. Building to these standards, however, is incredibly labour intensive. Please respect that hard work by never riding on unsanctioned trails, by staying on the trails you do ride, and by never building a new trail without the permission and involvement of the land managers. If you do have thoughts about possible new or improved trails, contact [TORCA](#) and we can help you navigate your trail-building interests.

DID YOU KNOW?

The typical cost to build a new trail is \$20-\$30 per metre of trail. Maintenance costs are in addition to that amount. We thank all of the dedicated trailbuilders in the Tri-Cities who donate thousands of hours every year to make this region an exceptional place to ride bikes.

TALK LIKE A MOUNTAIN BIKER

Mountain bikers love to talk about trail conditions and their latest ride—here's a guide to some of the words you might be hearing on the hills around the Tri-Cities.

BERM

An angled, built-up corner on a trail. It can be made of rock, wood or dirt.

BUNNY HOP

Lifting your front tire first and then your rear tire to get over an obstacle.

CLEAN RIDE

A ride with no stopping or dabbing or crashing.

CLIMB

The section of the trail that you will need to pedal uphill.

CROSS-COUNTRY

A more pedal-y type of riding that focuses on fitness. Usually involves lower-sized trail bikes that are more efficient, and shorter travel bikes.

DABBING

Putting your foot down to keep your balance while riding.

DOUBLE TRACK

A trail or that has two lines, like a Jeep track.

DOWNHILL

Riding that is predominantly downhill. Usually involves longer travel bikes, and can sometimes be tough and technical.

DROP

A change in elevation that requires you to get airborne. (Do not roll a drop!)

DROPPING IN

Getting ready to start the trail or roll into the feature.

DUFF

Soft and spongy organic material, like decomposing cedar wood.

ENDO

When you cartwheel, with your rear wheel coming off the ground and over you.

ENDURO

A style of racing with multiple timed downhill sections but the uphill grind is not timed.

FEATURE

A technical trail feature (TTF), like a rock or ladder, that you ride over or drop.

FIRE ROAD

A gravel road maintained for fire crews so they can access the forest area when needed.

FORK

Two meanings: a split in the trail or road, or the front suspension on your bike.

LEVEL LIFT

A method of using body movement and bike compression to lift both wheels off the ground simultaneously.

LOAM

Technically, this is soil composed of sand, silt and a small amount of clay—an inorganic mineral composition. But it is often misused among riders to describe an organic/natural trail (leaves, debris, decomposing needles, wood).

OFF CAMBER

A section of trail or feature that is not level laterally.

READY POSITION

Holding your hips, knees and elbows in a bent position while standing on your pedals.

ROLL

A feature or section of trail that your bike can roll down with both wheels on the ground.

SANCTIONED

A trail that has been approved by the local land manager.

SINGLE TRACK

A trail with a single narrow path.

TRAIL KARMA

Taking care of the trail, so it takes care of you. You can earn trail karma by joining in on a trail-building day, donating to local trail associations (like TORCA!), and showing appreciation for volunteer builders when you see them out at work on a trail.

TRAVEL

The physical distance your suspension components on your bike can move.

UNSANCTIONED

A trail that has not been approved by the local land manager.

WHAT TO PACK

Before you head out to the trails, make sure you pack along everything you need to have a safe, comfortable and exciting day.

THE BASICS

- Water (a least 1 litre per person)
- A snack, like a protein or granola bar
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Your helmet

SAFETY

- Phone
- ID
- First aid kit
- Whistle
- Safety blanket/warm layer
- Headlamp and bike lamp

TOOLS

- Knife or scissors
- Flat-fixing tools (tube, pump, tire levers)
- Multi-tool
- Chain break tool (may be part of multi-tool)
- Master chain link (also called a quick connect link—used for easy connection and disconnection of your chain)
- Spare derailleur hanger (for longer or remote rides)

PRO TIP

Zip ties and electrical tape are great for making a quick temporary fix to broken parts or loose cables, or just to “Macgyver” your bike back together so you can get down the hill!

LESSONS AND GROUP RIDES

The #1 way to enjoy mountain biking is to do it with others who are at a similar skill level! Here are some groups you can join to start networking and meeting like-minded mountain bikers in the Tri-Cities and beyond.

TORCA

We host regular group rides for all riders of all levels. Keep an eye on our Facebook page—you can click on the Events tab to see a list of upcoming rides.

[click here](#)

TRAILSHREDDERS

This is a Facebook group for mountain bikers and those interested in the sport. If you're on Facebook, join this group to meet other riders, get in on group rides, swap gear and get stoked!

[click here](#)

TRI-CITY MTB GROUP

Group rides for women. Those who identify as women, trans and/or non-binary are welcome!

[click here](#)

KINETIK CYCLES MOUNTAIN BIKE CLUB

Organizes regular group rides through Meetup.com

[click here](#)

MUDDBUNNIES

A women-only riding club with weekly rides for all levels of mountain bikers. Operates mostly in the Fraser Valley, with occasional rides in the Tri-Cities area.

[click here](#)

MEET A LOCAL MOUNTAIN BIKE TEACHER



RICHARD HARRON

Instructor, The Learning Curve Mountain Biking

Richard helps more Tri-Cities residents discover the joys of mountain biking by leading regular TORCA group rides for beginners. He also offers lessons on the foundational mountain biking skills, with semi-private and private class options. Check out [TLCmountainbiking.ca](https://www.tlcmountainbiking.ca) for more information.

WHERE TO BUY A BIKE

Don't have a bike yet? Here are a few great places around the Tri-Cities that can help gear you up at any budget.

KINETIK CYCLES

102-2560 Barnet Hwy, Coquitlam

604-939-2447

[visit website](#)

PITT MEADOW CYCLES

Meadowvale Mall, 110A-19150 Lougheed Hwy, Pitt Meadows

604-465-2885

[visit website](#)

TREK BICYCLES

3590 Westwood St, Port Coquitlam

604-941-7822

[visit website](#)

GOOD WEBSITE FOR USED BIKES:

Pinkbike

[visit website](#)

For a good primer on selecting the right mountain bike for you, read “The Ultimate Guide to Buying a Mountain Bike” [here](#).

KEEP YOUR BIKE IN GOOD SHAPE!

Maintain your bike regularly, and always do a quick bike check before starting any ride, including front and rear tire releases, seat post and tire pressure. Lube your chain, check that your handlebars and pedals aren't loose, check the tightness of your grips, shifters, and the brake levers on your handlebar, and check for lateral motion in your wheels.

SEE IT ON YOUTUBE

For a great overview of a proper bike check, visit the Global Mountain Bike Network's YouTube page, [here](#).

MORE RESOURCES

RYAN LEECH CONNECTION

Online tutorials for learning mountain bike skills

learn.ryanleech.com

TRAILFORKS

An app and website that's packed with info on local trails, including current conditions

trailforks.com

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN TORCA

Reason #7

You can support the future of this sport by showing your community, your representatives, your local businesses and even future generations that mountain biking matters in the Tri-Cities.

join now

GET INVOLVED WITH TORCA

The Tri-Cities Off Road Cycling Association is here to make cycling in our beautiful region safe, fun and accessible to all—and to give all Tri-Cities citizens as many opportunities as possible to get on our bikes and have a great time.

You can help us sustain and support riding in our community—and give yourself more and better opportunities to go deeper into this fantastic sport while you're at it! Here are just a few of the ways you can get involved:

BECOME A MEMBER

Your annual membership to TORCA gets you access to fun events and workshops, funds our trail-building activities, helps us buy critical things like tools and insurance, and supports our efforts in raising the profile and infrastructure for mountain biking in our region. Join today and become part of the TORCA family!

[click here](#)

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Come out and help us build and maintain your favourite trails in the Tri-Cities. Our trail-building events are full of snacks, fun, and good company, and you'll be providing a massive service to the hiking and mountain biking communities in the Tri-Cities. No experience is required! We're also always on the lookout for extra hands at our many public events.

[learn more](#)

DONATE

Help fund our work to maintain the mountain bike trail network in the Tri-Cities—100 percent of money donated goes toward tools, materials, food for volunteers and other costs of developing and preserving and protecting our beloved mountain playground.

[donate now](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Without the help of our dedicated volunteers, it would cost \$20,000 to \$30,000 per kilometre to build a bike trail!



Tri-Cities Off Road Cycling Association

torca.ca