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## **INTRODUCTION TO MOUNTAIN BIKING**

### **WHAT YOU NEED**

—PROPERLY ADJUSTED MOUNTAIN BIKE—See **BIKE CHECK ON REVERSE**.

—HELMET—Properly fitted; square on head, not tilted back or forward. Padding should be snug but not tight; Occipital (rear of skull) retention should be snug; strap adjustment locks must meet under ears; chin strap must be snug. Visor (if equipped) should not obscure vision. Replace every five years as the polystyrene foam breaks down due to exposure to sun and heat. Replace immediately if involved in a crash. Check manufacturer's warranty for replacement details.

—WATER—Drink 8-16 ounces for every 30-60 minutes of activity, depending on heat and exertion level. Preferable carrying method is a backpack with internal water bladder; water bottles are OK but they tend to fall off the bike over rough terrain.

—GLOVES—Protects hands from blisters and in the event of a fall. Also absorbs moisture for better control.

—MOUNTAIN BIKE SHOES—Solid pedaling platform, better tread for walking/hiking. More rugged than running shoes. Shape is contoured to better adapt to toe clips; soles adapt to clipless pedal cleats, which provide a more secure and anatomic foot position for cross-country riding.

—SHORTS—Absorbs perspiration and reduces chafing; contoured fit won't get in the way of saddle. "Baggy" shorts are also available which give a more casual appearance.

—UPPER BODY CLOTHING—Close fitting, wicking material to better allow perspiration to evaporate to outer layer (avoid baggy cotton T-shirts or sweat shirts as they can snag on branches or saddle; cotton stays wet and can contribute to hypothermia in extreme cases). For cooler weather, dress in layers, and always carry a windbreaker.

—EYE WEAR—Protects against branches, bugs and dust.

—TOOLS—Minimum of tire lever/Quik Stick, new innertube and patch kit, mini-pump. In addition, chain breaker, Allen (hexagonal) keys, pliers/multi-tool (and knowledge of how to use them).

—HIGH CARBOHYDRATE SNACK—If riding more than two hours. (If fructose/sucrose intolerant, try using trail mix consisting of nuts and raisins or other dried fruits such as dried apricots).

—FIRST AID— Gauze, adhesive bandages, antibacterial cream, cloth tape, bandanna, antiseptic wipes, sting ointment, space blanket, medical info, emergency contacts, identification, blood type, etc. Carrying a cell phone is also highly recommended.

—SUNSCREEN—Especially on neck, ears, backs of arms and legs.

## **BIKE CHECK**

—CLEAN—Cleaning regularly (every 2-4 rides depending on exposure to water/mud/dust) can help you spot trouble before it gets serious. Use low pressure garden hose or spray bottle to wet the bike, then a soft cloth to clean. Do not use water at high pressure as it can damage ball bearings. To clean chain/gears: Use bio-degradable degreaser and a bristle brush and/or take your bike to your dealer as part of your service warranty.

—DRIVETRAIN LUBRICATION—Immediately after degreasing, preferably with light viscosity lubricant. Lubricate chain only. Wipe any errant lube from rim brake surfaces (cantilever brake systems).

—BRAKE ALIGNMENT—Make sure brake pads are not rubbing tire and are contacting rim surface correctly (front edge touching just slightly before the rest of the pad) and completely; check that disc brake rotors are not rubbing. Never engage brake lever when disc-equipped wheel is not installed on bike.

—CABLES/WIRES—Check for fraying or unraveling wires, and worn, cracked or broken outer cables.

—PROPER TIRE PRESSURE—30-60 pounds per square inch (psi) depending on rider weight. See sidewall for psi range info. (Rider weight/psi examples: 130 pounds/35-40 psi; 175 pounds/40-50 psi; over 200 pounds/50-60 psi.

—QUICK RELEASE POSITION—Feel tension at 90 degrees (half-way closed), close with palm of hand squeezing against fork/frame). Front lever vertical and parallel with fork blade if possible; rear lever parallel with chain stay or seat stay. Both front and rear can also be pointed horizontally to the rear, as long as they are closed completely.

—CONTROL CENTER SAFETY CHECK—To check for loose handlebar stem connection to the headset, do the following: Stand in front of bike and clamp the front tire between your knees. While holding the handlebar as you would while riding, hold the front wheel firmly while turning the handlebar left and right, and pushing down on the brake levers. There should be no movement of the stem, handlebar, or brake levers. If anything moves, use the appropriate Allen (hexagonal) wrench to tighten or take your bike to you dealer immediately. To check headset: While engaging the front brake only, move the bike horizontally back and forth and look/listen/feel for a clicking/clunking sound. If you see/hear/feel a loose or clicking/clunking sound from the headset area (steering tube of the frame where the fork and handlebar intersect), take the bike to your dealer immediately.