



Post iCan Bike Spotting Tips

Practice is the most important component following our program. We recommend that you take your rider out the day after the program has ended and practice often, the more the better.

Reminders:

- Helmets are not optional - *always* wear a helmet!
- Flat open parking lots or outdoor running tracks make the best practice areas.
- Minimal obstacles and distractions reduce fear, anxiety and promote focus.
- Practice 20 minutes or so, don't overdo it.
- Make practice fun and celebrate the accomplishments!

Spotting

Hold the training handle while your rider gets on and off the bike.

While holding the handle, have the rider put both feet on the pedals and look forward (you may need to give them a target to look at). Use simple, easy instructions and don't ask questions, make statements instead. Ex. "Feet on the pedals. Eyes forward. ", and while giving a push to start say, "Here we go!"

Before pushing off, make sure the bike is straight up and down, perpendicular to the ground, not leaning to one side or the other. This allows the rider to be in an upright sitting posture and feel safe.

Place one hand lightly holding the end of one of the handle bars and with the other hold the back training handle. Holding the front handle bar initially allows the bike and rider to get a straight start instead of going into a spiral motion.

With an open hand on the trainer handle, use your palm to give a strong push and you increase speed along with the bike and rider. As soon as the bike is moving, let go of the handlebar and then the training handle.

It is imperative to provide a fast enough push allowing the rider to gain momentum and balance on the bike. If the rider does not have enough speed, they may fall over to one side.

Now, the most courageous part of spotting, you must let go of the training handle. This allows the rider to wobble and self correct the wobble. Eventually the wobble straightens out and the rider is in complete control.

Continue to run just out of the rider's line of vision, behind the right but to the side. Never run directly behind the bike while spotting in case your rider stops unexpectedly. We want you to be safe as well as your rider.

You should never be more than arm's length away from the handle as you run along with your rider. The goal is for the spotter to be close enough if needed, but not holding the training handle.

You may use your palm to assist or manipulate the handle to help prevent a fall or stop the bike. But remember to let go. If you hold on to the handle you're doing the balancing, not the rider.

If the rider begins to lose speed and begins to weave side to side give an open hand push with the training handle and your rider will gain speed and likely straighten out. Momentum is important when learning to ride a bicycle.

If a rider begins to fall, you may grab the handle and/or the rider to stop the bike and have your rider put both feet on the ground.

A fall or a near fall should be dealt with in a positive way, and immediately.

If a rider falls, give a quick check to make sure your rider is not seriously hurt, and get right back on the bike! If a rider walks away from a fall, even to take a quick break, fear and anxiety begins to build and within moments getting back on the bike seems impossible to the rider. Even if a rider has a scraped knee and is crying, just a quick lap before stopping to get a Band-Aid makes getting back on the bike later so much easier. This concept is critical to a rider's continued success while learning to ride.

Braking

At iCan Bike programs we recommend a hand brake over a coaster brake. For most riders it is easier to differentiate between the two motor skills of feet move forward to make and go and hand makes you stop. This does not mean that riders cannot successfully use a coaster brake.

Hand brakes

Help the rider move forward on the bike then squeeze the hand brake so they feel the bike stop. Explain that when they squeeze the brake the bike will stop and then they need to put both feet on the ground. So, first squeeze then feet on the ground. Have the rider practice this by pedaling and then when you say stop they squeeze and put both feet on the ground.

Coaster Brakes

Explain that in order to make the bike stop the rider will need to use the pedals. For this approach you may just need to find the right wording to make the process make sense. Some of the ones we use are pedal backwards, kick back, and push back. A physical cue of firmly pushing down on the area just above the knee, works well for most individuals.

Another way to practice coaster braking, if other approaches are not working, is by getting off the bike. Stand beside the rider and explain when we want to go forward we walk forward when we want to stop we step backwards with one foot hard and fast. Say "forward" and together walk forward then say "stop" and both quickly step back with one foot. Repeat this until it appears the rider understands then return to their convention bike.

Self-Starting

Self-starting can be a very frustrating skill for many riders to learn. It may take a while for a rider to accomplish this skill so if it ever begins to cause a lot of frustration and seems to be discouraging a rider from riding altogether go back to giving them a push to get started to build their confidence back up and try self starting later. When practicing starting make sure you are on a even surface. Do not try and teach this going uphill. A small decline can be helpful.

There are two main types of starting we teach. Both starts will likely be more successful if you are able to get on a bike and show the rider first. Be sure to wear a helmet!

Frog Start

This way of starting is easier for most riders because the position of the pedals does not matter, they have multiple chances to build up speed and their bike starts off straight up and down.

Have the rider sit on the bike with both feet on the ground. Tell them they are going to push off the ground 3 times really hard (like a frog, both feet at the same time) and then put both feet on the pedals and pedal.

It is helpful for you to count their 3 pushes with them and then say pedal. If 3 pushes are not giving the rider enough speed you may make the decision to say push 4 times or 5 times.

Power Start

This start does work better for some riders but for many it is difficult because the pedals have to be in the right position.

Have the rider walk the bike until one pedal is pushed a little beyond its highest point. You can say make one pedal tall and one pedal small. The rider will put their foot on the tall pedal and the other foot on the ground.

At the same time they will push down hard on the pedal and push off the ground with their other foot and then begin pedaling.

These starts can all be altered to fit an individual. If your rider is doing a different start or combining these two starts in some way and it is beginning to work help them alter it in any way to make it fit their abilities.