

Bike School 101 - Tips and tricks for newcomers and advanced riders



Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis, Austria – Navigating roots and rocks on a challenging natural single trail, gaining pace down a perfectly shaped flow line in the bike park, enjoying lots of airtime on kickers and drops – it’s hard to have more fun than on a mountain bike! Given of course, that you have mastered your bike and know how to ride. Someone who instinctively knows the basics of mountain biking is Daniel Newman, internationally experienced bike rider and head of the Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis Bike School.

Australian rider Daniel has found a second home in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis. The man from Sydney has been at home on the sunny plateau high above the Tyrolean Upper Inntal valley since 2014. As the head of the bike school, he not only knows the region's trails inside out, but also knows exactly what mountain biking is all about. In the following interview, Daniel gives advice to anyone who wants to start mountain biking.

Hi Daniel, first of all: What are the basics that you need or learn for mountain biking? What do you start with?

Daniel: Most people know how to ride a bike and have even sat on a mountain bike - usually with a hardtail, but not a full suspension bike. When we speak of people with no experience, we are mostly referring to those who have never ridden a mountain bike in the alpine. Learning to brake with the front and rear brakes is a must. It is also necessary to understand where your centre of gravity needs to be in order to maintain stability on the bike. But most importantly, don't overdo it. Starts with easy trails and not too steep routes. Seek advice from experienced riders or take a course.

Thanks to balance bikes and pumptracks, children are often already comfortable on bicycles, even at the age of three. At what age do you recommend starting mountain biking? When is a child old enough?

Daniel: As soon as a child can ride a bicycle independently, you can start with it. Skills such as correct braking and steering while standing, not only contribute to the child's safety, but also push their potential. It is important to start with pumptracks and short exercise rides. For the little ones: short, easy and lots of fun! I see kids doing incredible things on bikes every day. But they started early and had ramps and tracks to play with or are just natural talents. In general, one should always pay attention to how long children can maintain their energy and focus. Braking with your hands and riding over rough terrain can be exhausting.

In the bike school you differentiate between basic, beginner and slightly advanced? What is behind this classification?

Daniel: Our classification is based on the terrain we have in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis – [single trails](#) and [bike park](#) – and the skills required for it. By "basic" we mean the basic skills that children need to ride on pump tracks and overcome simple obstacles, mostly on flat terrain. This can also be applied to adults whose experience is limited to riding on asphalt. "Beginners" are those who have little to no experience in mountain regions. This also includes people who might ride simple single trails but have no experience in an alpine bike park. Anyone who feels comfortable on the blue, easy trails in the bike park, is considered "slightly advanced", in combination with a reasonable amount of experience on trails that are classified with the level of difficulty S1.

What are the most popular trails and tracks in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis for newcomers and which would you recommend for advanced riders?

Daniel: The nice thing here in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis is that there is something for everyone. Milky Way in the bike park or the Alpkopftrail or Högtrail single trails are great for beginners. For more experienced bikers, the Supernatural line in the bike park is definitely recommended, but also the Jochtrail or my personal favourite the Frommestrail. On the other hand, only really good and experienced riders should venture on the Hill Bill line.

What are the important tips to keep in mind when I go biking with my child?

Daniel: Be sure to pay attention to the ability and the mental and physical strength of the child and adapt your tour accordingly. Find out about the steepness and terrain of the route and keep pedalling uphill to a minimum. Have enough to drink, take enough breaks and keep an eye on the weather. Tip: destinations that the children can play at can increase motivation. Be realistic about how far you will actually get and make it a relaxing and fun day. One more thing: trailers and child seats have no place in the bike park or on single trails!

Do you have any tips on choosing the right bike? From what age or weight do you think a suspension fork or disc brakes, for example, make sense?

Daniel: The weight is not important. Nowadays everything is adjustable. I don't think so much about age, more about the size of the person and a bike that is suitable for the terrain they are riding on. Children should be able to easily reach the ground with their feet while they are on the bike. A suspension fork is not absolutely necessary for younger children who do not ride off-road a lot. What is more important is that they learn to use the brakes, both front and rear. The bigger the wheels on the bike, the faster you can go. Children often like to compare the size of the wheels. 20", 24", 26" or 27.5"... But the frames of the different brands all have a different geometry. The combination of wheel size and frame of the bike must be suitable for the size of the person.

At what age is it worth having your own bike? Does it make more sense to rent?

Daniel: Little kids love bikes! Even balance bikes. I think the sooner you can ride, the better. It's great for their development and promotes an active lifestyle. So, go get them a bike! Since children quickly outgrow bicycles, second-hand bikes are a good option, as is renting them while on vacation. Most sports shops refresh their stocks every year and often have the latest models. They are a great source for buying used bikes, too.

In addition to classic bike courses, you and the bike school also offer various activities and tours. The Early Rides are definitely a highlight. What's it all about? Who are they for?

Daniel: Besides the courses, we have a lot of great activities. The [Early Rides](#) are one of my favourites. We offer transport to the summit of the Schönjoch at 2,436 metres (7992 ft.) above sea level in the early morning to enjoy the fantastic panoramic view of Germany, Austria, Italy and Switzerland in the morning light. Then you ride with a guide on various single trails to Serfaus and back to the bike park, where breakfast is served. Back on the North Side of Fiss, the grand finale is waiting for you - the legendary Frommestrail.

With our [camps and activities](#) we make aspects of sport accessible that are not commonplace for the average consumer. This includes, for example, getting to know a pro rider, riding with and learning from him. But also, testing equipment or riding otherwise inaccessible trails. We have a number of great camps for children, too, also some dedicated to women.

Finally: Is there anything that you would like to give newcomers to mountain biking from your personal experience?

Daniel: Have fun! Take your time and try not to accomplish too much at once, especially with children. Take it slow at first, stay safe and enjoy it. You are here to enjoy your vacation!

Thank you, Daniel!

Of course, Daniel Newman and his team have even more expertise available personally on site, where they are more than happy to help with assessing your riding level, giving advice on courses and your next personal steps or, of course, guiding you on various rides. Click here for the program of the Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis Bike School: www.bike-sfl.at/en/bikeschool/bikeschool-offer.

Further information on biking in Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis is available at: www.bike-sfl.at/en. Details on the Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis holiday region, the precautions and measures relating to the current Covid situation as well as information on the possibilities to refund or postpone your stay can be found at www.serfaus-fiss-ladis.at/en.

Find us on:     

#serfausfissladis #wearefamily #weilwirsgeniessen
#bikeschulesfl #bikesfl #bikeparksfl #gooddaysfl #bestbikereel

**Reprint free of charge
Copy requested**

Texts and pictures for download: www.bike-sfl.at/en/service/press

Media Contact:

Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis Tourist Board
Alexandra Hangl
Gänsackerweg 2
6534 Serfaus
Telefon: +43 (0)5476 6239 72
E-Mail: a.hangl@serfaus-fiss-ladis.at

or

RASOULUTION GmbH
Philip Leidinger
Karl-Theodor-Straße 55
80803 München
Telefon: +49 89 386 67 09 17
E-Mail: press@rasoulution.com

About the region Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis

Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis is the place to be for a family holiday. Regardless whether it is summer or winter, there is always something going on. In summer the cable cars and bus shuttles connect the mountainous region of Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis. Apart from many other attractions the Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis high plateau offers bike fun for the whole family. From gentle bike rides for young and old, to mountain bike tours in the middle of breath-taking mountain scenery, to action-packed descents on single trails or courses through Bikepark Serfaus-Fiss-Ladis. The Waldbahn takes riders and their bikes to the trails within the bike park, which have different levels of difficulty from blue (easy) and red (medium) to black (expert). There is also a kids park, slopestyle area with a landing bag, pumptrack, dirt line and training area at the bottom station, where beginners can try out and get used to their new equipment. Experts in the bike shop advise in bike and safety equipment matters and the bike school and rental office shop can also be found here. Beside the shop there is also a chill out area and a snack bar.