

What is Observed Trials?

Trials is:

- Not an “extreme” sport
- A test of rider vs. terrain at a walking pace
- A Zen-like mix of balance and control
- An endless learning curve of skill development
- The most fun you’ll ever have on two wheels!

In a trials competition, the challenge is to get through each of 10 test “sections” without losing your balance, putting a foot down (“dabbing”), falling over, or riding outside the lines. Each section has an entry gate, an exit gate, and colored ribbon marking the riding boundaries. Points are taken for each dab or fault within a section. The sections are scattered along a loop trail, which is ridden three times. The lowest cumulative score wins.

The test sections are designed for every skill level, with the goal of keeping it challenging, but safe and fun. Beginner and Novice lines focus on development of basic skills like throttle control, balance and slow turns. The Intermediate class sections will add tighter turns, off-camber slopes, logs and obstacles. Advanced class riders encounter bigger logs, steps and drops, hillclimbs, and very tight turns. Expert and Champion level riders are challenged with HUGE obstacles and turns so tight they must hop the bike around. Champ-level riding is what Youtube will show you, but there is a lot of fun to be had in riding at your own level and in watching the experts do their stuff.

Who can ride trials?

Anyone who is reasonably fit and can stand on the pegs of a motorcycle can learn to ride trials. Mountain bike handling skills also translate well to trials. There is certainly no age limit: PST currently has members from 5 years old to 75+ years old. Whether you're an experienced rider looking for a new challenge or a casual weekend rider looking for some fun, you will find it in trials. As in all sports, there are risks, but the goal of all trials clubs is to provide safe and enjoyable events for all skill levels.

What equipment do you need to ride trials?

A trials motorcycle is required. A helmet is also required for your safety. Boots, kneepads, gloves and eye protection are highly recommended. The great thing about trials is that you don't need the latest, fastest motorcycle to be competitive and have fun. Bikes of all vintages can be found on Craigslist, or you can contact your local dealer for new or used bikes (see our sponsor links on the homepage.)

Trials motorcycles of the mid-80's to 90's are very popular at the Novice to Intermediate level and can be purchased for a couple thousand dollars. The mid-90's brought quick-revving water-cooled engines, aluminum frames and better suspension. In the new millennium, the bikes are very specialized, almost exotic, costing several thousand dollars new. If you have an older dual-shock trials motorcycle most clubs offer a Vintage class.

What if I want to just give it a try?

The best way to find out about the sport is to come to an event. You can just watch, or if you have a bike to ride our friendly members will be happy to show you the ropes. And the first competition is free! Check out the “Up Next” box on the Homepage for directions to the next event in our area.

What else will you need?

Practice, practice, practice! You only need a small space like a backyard or driveway to practice the basics like tight turns, balance, throttle, brake and clutch control. And since the bikes are quieter than the average lawnmower, you can probably ride in your suburban yard without bothering the neighbors!

For more information on observed trials in the greater Seattle area, contact any of our Club Officers listed.