

Mountain biking is a great activity that provides exercise, challenge, excitement and the opportunity to experience some fantastic environments and locations in Northern Ireland.

Information on the best places to ride can be found at:



powered by



Accredited activity providers can be found at:



**OUTDOORNI.COM**



Look for **Adventuremark** accredited providers who have been independently checked to ensure they operate to recognised industry standards, and that their staff are appropriately experienced and hold recognised leadership or coaching qualifications, such as the Trail Cycle or Mountain Bike Leader Awards.

Other information can be found at:

**[www.cyclingulster.com](http://www.cyclingulster.com)**  
**[www.MountainBikeNI.com](http://www.MountainBikeNI.com)**  
**[www.nimba.org.uk](http://www.nimba.org.uk)**

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## Enjoy the Great Outdoors

A guide to responsible mountain biking





**Mountain biking has been growing very rapidly over the past 10 years, and in response to this demand a number of purpose-built trails have now been developed that provide new opportunities for participation in this sport.**

Trails are graded to help you plan to ride within your skill levels; and as you progress your skills you can successfully ride harder trails. Trails involve terrain that may be uneven, steep with tight twisting turns, or contain obstacles, boulders or boardwalk. Riding such features provides both challenge and adventure but the risks of falling off your bike and gaining an injury can be high. If you do have an accident please be aware that in remote locations it can take some time for the emergency services to get to you. If possible try to get to the trail head where access is easy.

Details of the new trails and grades can be found at **MountainBikeNI.com**

While the managers of these trails have a responsibility to keep them well maintained, **ultimately you are responsible to look after yourself, as you have accepted the risks associated with this activity; but you also need to be responsible towards other users of the area and the environment.**

It is important to treat these trails with respect and have the right clothing, equipment, knowledge and experience before setting out. Why not have a lesson or develop your skills through a qualified leader or instructor?

Responsible riding involves following a code of conduct:

**1. Make the most of official mountain bike trails:**

These trails have been developed to provide high quality mountain biking experiences and are designed to minimise the impact on the natural environment. They are built to specific standards and help to avoid conflict with other forest users. Riding on unofficial trails may have negative impacts on both the environment and the image of mountain biking.

**2. Ride on open trails:** Occasionally sections of official trails may need to be closed for repair work – please respect these closures and if you are unsure about the status of a trail consult **MountainBikeNI.com**

**3. Read and follow signage and information:**

Most official trails have a one way system to control the risks of collisions and also to manage conflict with other users – please follow these systems. When riding on dual direction trails keep to the left.

**4. Look after and use the right equipment:**

Keeping your bike in good working condition and regularly checking brakes, gears, wheels, etc. is essential to safe riding. Always carry a puncture repair kit, a basic tool kit and a small first aid kit when riding trails, especially those that are in remote locations. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear. Carrying some food and liquid along with spare clothing is important in more remote locations or in winter.

**5. Control your bicycle:** Inattention for even a moment could put yourself and others at risk. Obey any speed recommendations and ride within your limits. A number of **accredited activity providers** can provide skill development training and this is an excellent way to help you push your limits.

**6. Respect others:** Do your best to let your fellow trail users know you're coming – a friendly greeting or bell ring are good. Try to anticipate other trail users as you ride around corners. When crossing other trails and forest roads, be very cautious and courteous and yield to users. Riders traveling downhill should yield to those going uphill, unless the trail is clearly signed for one-way or downhill-only traffic. In general, strive to make each pass a safe and courteous one.

**7. Leave No Trace:** Be sensitive to the environment by staying on existing trails and not creating new ones or creating shortcuts by cutting switchbacks. Leave absolutely no litter behind you – even bio-degradable items.

**8. Be considerate to wildlife and livestock:**

Animals are easily startled by an unannounced approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. Give any animals enough room and time to adjust to you. When passing horses on dual trails, be very cautious and follow directions from the horse riders.

**9. Plan ahead:** Apply these principles when considering where you are going and what you are planning to do; strive to be a self-sufficient and responsible rider who earns a genuine welcome at all times to the trails. If you are heading out on your own it is a good idea to let someone know where you are going and what time you expect to be back.

**BIOSECURITY**

**There are increasing threats to trees, plants and wildlife from disease and invasive species. Riders need to help prevent this by ensuring that you follow any specific information at a site regarding cleaning and/or disinfecting your bike and equipment.**

**In general it is important to brush any loose material off your wheels, footwear and bike and if possible wash down your bike before you leave the site.**

**Before your next adventure clean your bike thoroughly.**

