Double Blip
From the staff at the Trials Training Center

In the last few months we've talked about high flying splatters and drop offs. But now it's time to focus on a technique that is less spectacular but yet very effective at riding in control. And it's an important technique for riders from the intermediate level and up.

For a moderate sized ledge or rock, it is usually possible to blast up and over with a single aggressive move and not much technique. The double blip is used to go over a modest sized obstacle with a minimum of speed and a maximum of control. This technique is very useful for moderate sized ledges or logs in which there is another turn immediately after and so you need to be at slow speed or stopped after the obstacle. It is especially useful on slippery logs or rocks, especially those at a sloping angle so that you don't want to skid pan on them. If your skid pan touches on a ledge sloping off to one side, it will throw you to the side and cause you to dab or tip over.

The term "double blip" refers to the two distinct blips of the throttle associated with this technique. The double blip involves a first blip to initiate a wheelie **into** the obstacle, followed by a second blip (along with body movement) to achieve vertical lift up & over the obstacle. There are other maneuvers which involve two blips of the throttle, most notably the zap. The zap involves a wheelie to bring the front wheel down onto the top of the obstacle rather than into it, so as to achieve greater lift from the rear. This article will concentrate on the basic double blip.

The basics of this technique are as follows (refer to the figures of TTC instructor Bruce LeRiche demonstrating):
1. On the approach, be sure to look past or through the obstacle to the point where you want to be on the far side of the obstacle.
2. You will need to do a wheelie into the ledge or log, and you need to be able to place your front wheel with precision. You initiate the wheelie with a dip of the knees forward to compress the front, as Bruce is starting to do in photo 1. In general, the body movements to intitiate the wheelie occur on the approach, starting a few feet before the point at which the front wheel leaves the ground. You can add a bit of brakes if needed or desired to help compress the front to start the wheelie.
3. As the forks rebound, your butt should go back to lift the front wheel and you add in the first blip of the throttle to both help the wheelie and to move the bike into the obstacle. Start to lift the front wheel at a distance away from the obstacle approximately equal to the height of the obstacle. Remember to look past the obstacle to where you want to end up; don't focus on the obstacle itself or you will tend to stop on it rather than over it.
4. The front wheel should generally contact the obstacle about ½ to ¾ of the way up the face. On an "air log" or undercut ledge you may need to go toward the higher end of the range, if the face is flat or sloping you may contact a bit lower. This contact with the obstacle compresses both the front and rear suspension, as you can see in photo 2.
5. After the front wheel contacts and the suspension is compressed, apply the second blip of throttle and jump "chest first" through the handlebars. As you jump your body over the obstacle, the bike will follow. This needs to be a very physical move, with a lot of spring in the legs to jump big! No holding back! On photo 3 you can see that the bike has left the ground and the rear wheel is in the air without having yet contacted the obstacle.

6. The rebound of both suspensions along with the applied second blip and the jumping through the bars all help to lift the rear wheel so that it coasts over the top of the obstacle without depending on traction on the obstacle. As the bike clears the obstacle, the weight goes back to help the bike clear with momentum (not trying to drive over). Look how far Bruce's weight is back in photo 4.

All of the steps are important, and the double blip technique involves a combination of several things including precise wheelie, throttle control and timing, possibly clutching for the second blip, and a lot of exaggerated body movements. If you are having trouble with any aspect, isolate and practice that technique. For example, if you have trouble consistently placing your front wheel where needed, go practice precise wheelies and putting your front wheel in a specific spot. In order to do larger obstacles, the pros use the clutch to produce the second blip instead of throttle alone. This requires practice to be able to have good timing. Practice on a small obstacle that does not pose a danger and is not beyond your limits. You learn new techniques by focusing on the technique first, then build up to a big new challenging obstacle after the technique is mastered.

After you've mastered the basic double blip technique, you can add other elements, such as holding pressure as shown in photo 5. This is a more advanced technique, used to keep the front end high over the back side of the obstacle. It may be necessary to hold pressure if there's a hole on the back side of the obstacle, another ledge or log immediately behind so that you need to keep the front wheel high, or the ledge slopes upward so that it is desirable to maximize traction to continue. The major difference with the basic double blip is in the legs after the second blip; rather than a total rear shift of the weight allowing the bike to come up underneath the rider, the rider should push with the legs as seen in photo 5. Note how the rear is compressing in this photo; this push of the legs will provide maximum traction as all the weight is on the rear and nothing on the front. Also, more body movement is needed to get the rear up onto the obstacle.

Practice, practice, practice, and you'll be able to ride with greater precision and control. It may just come in handy next season at the nationals in Tennessee, where there may just possibly be a slippery rock or two. As always, you can find more info and some video clips by checking the TTC website at www.trialstrainingcenter.com.