

Tight Turns in Tight Spots
From the staff at the Trials Training Center
[Trials Competition News](#), Summer, 2005

A few months ago we explained basic turning techniques, with some demonstration photos of proper body position in a flat grassy field. We've also described floater turns, with Chris Florin demonstrating. In this article we'll apply both of these techniques to a real world situation often faced in any club trial or national, and that is the use of these techniques to maneuver the bike through a tight spot. This tight spot could be a turn between some rocks or logs or a V-shaped gully.

The key idea is to track the rear tire through the smoothest possible line. In order to do that you must put the front tire out of line to the outside and over a less smooth line, sometimes even requiring a floater to carry the front wheel over obstacles. The example in this article is a tight line through a crack in some rocks, and is demonstrated by TTC instructor Bruce LeRiche in the photos. Photos below show the both the front and rear view through the turn.

To do this turn, Bruce does a small floater against a rock on the outside, thus tracking the rear tire through the smooth line in the middle. The rock used to touch the front tire provides a target and a turning point, and when the front tire touches the rock the small impact also helps turn the bike. Some of the key points are:

- Run the front tire as wide as possible on the entrance to the turn (Figure 1) to smoothly initiate the floater.
- Look at the target (the rock against which the front tire is to touch) as you can see in photos 1 and 2
- Lean the bike using the feet so that you are turning before the front tire touches the target. Your body must be in proper turning position as seen in photos 3, 4, 6, 7, including:
 - Body rotates to the outside
 - Outside knee and elbow go out for stability
 - Foot rotates on peg (see photo 7)
 - Shoulders parallel to handlebars
 - Head upright
- Your body is centered from front to back before the front touches, and then as with any floater turn your body should come forward a little when the front touches (or is at the highest point if you're just tracking up a dirt bank instead of a floater in air) so as to pivot the bike on the back wheel (photos 3, 4, and 7)
- As you come out of the turn, apply pressure to the outside peg to straighten the bike up on landing (photos 5, 8, 9)
- Always look where you want to go next; notice how Bruce's eyes move in photos 1 through 5, always looking ahead
- A smooth steady throttle works fine in this maneuver, since there is nothing abrupt about it.

A floater turn through a tight spot is definitely an "old school" trials move, but one that is extremely valuable. And a perfectly executed floater turn through an ugly turn can be a beautiful thing. Keep yer feet up!