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## ACTIVITIES

**Expert Chain Gang**

## Expert Answers

### The Trick to Clipless Pedals

#### Jack's Question.

**I just started road biking and I need to know if there are any tricks to easily locking into the cleats on road biking shoes when you start pedaling.**

#### Ethan Gelber's Answer.

I wish that there were an easy answer to this. Unfortunately, like so many things in life, ease with clipless pedals only comes from practice.



The shoe cleats required for clipless pedals are basically shaped pieces of metal designed to fit snugly into a device that has enough spring to allow for the insertion and removal of the cleat, but that also has enough force to hold it. Insertion and removal usually involves a lateral twist uncharacteristic of the normal vertical pedaling motion. Thus, just by physics alone, you must apply a force greater than what you normally would and in an unusual direction. And it takes practice to get used to it.

Basically, the best way to begin is to clip one foot (the foot you normally begin with) into its pedal. The pedal should be where it normally is when you are launching into a roll from a stop. Once you have begun to roll, you will need to attach the other foot. You should try to fit the front end of the clip mechanism into place with your heel angled laterally out and away from the bike. Now the hard part: Once the front end of the clip is in position, you twist your heel inward while pressing down. This forces the rear end of the clip into place. This is the motion that takes time to master. Eventually, once you have a feel for things, it will come naturally and feel almost like you are just pushing down and into the pedal.

When you want to get out of the pedals, first remove the foot that you inserted second. In other words, if you only remove one foot from the pedals, it should not be the one you want attached when you begin. You will

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January 13, 2007

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need to twist your heel laterally out, a motion opposite the one you used to clip in. This too is hard to get used to, especially since failure to get out may result in falling over. However, once one part of the clip has been released, the other follows easily.

It is best to practice these motions on a stationary bike. Prop yourself up against a wall and test getting into and out of the clips. You should probably concentrate on the foot that will be doing this most, but eventually you will want to be equally able with both feet.

Good luck!

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