

ODYSSEY ANGELS



30 STEPS TO 30KM

So you're thinking about doing your first mountain bike race but don't really know where to start or what to do... well read on because these steps are designed to get you to the start line in good shape and over the finish line with a smile from ear to ear!

1. Lock it in!! Put the race date in your diary (Saturday 24 February) and tell people that you're going to do it.
2. Beg / borrow / steel a mountain bike. You may have one already but if not then see if you can get your hands on a mountain bike with knobby tires and gears.
3. Take your bike to a bike shop for a quick check up, we want to make sure the brakes and gears are working, and tires aren't too leaky.
4. Get some bike knicks* to wear whilst riding. Knicks are much better than leggings to ride in because they have a chamois under your bum which makes riding A LOT more comfortable down there. (**Knicks are padded bike shorts!*)
5. Go for a ride... it doesn't have to be far, or fast or technical or anything... just go out for a few riders and have fun. Starting out on the footpath and roads around home is 100% fine.
6. Arrange to meet a couple of girlfriends to join you for a ride – ride to the shops, for a coffee, to the beach... It doesn't matter where or how far you go, just get out on your bikes with your friends and have fun.
7. Have 'the discussion' – the discussion with your partner to tell him / her / the kids that this is going to happen a bit from now on – that you're going to have 'your time' and you're going to go riding with your friends. (Tell them it'll make you happier, sexier and sleeker...!).
8. Take a selfie of you, your bike and the wilderness, put it on social media to show your friends how much fun you're having – they might join you, or in the least they'll say GO GIRL!
9. Expand your riding a bit... keep riding the footpaths and bike paths but start to include some dirt, some grass and some mud. Start to build your confidence for riding off-road a bit. It's fun to get dirty!
10. Book a baby sitter for the kids / dogs / husbands / partners for race day – unless they want to come and be part of the action (they should – there is heaps for them to do as well – like jumping castle and face painting for kids and beer tent for the drinkers!).
11. Read, research and relax... there is heaps of great information on the event website www.OtwayOdyssey.com.au such as training information, what to eat, testimonials from other girls and plenty more. Let it sink and revel in the fact that you are doing it!
12. Network with other riders so you're not doing it all alone. Check out the [Odyssey Angels Facebook page](#) and meet some other women there. There is also plenty of other female focused Facebook groups.
13. If you are still looking for other women to partner up with then call a mountain bike club. Seriously, they are friendly groups of people who just love riding and will be happy to share ideas. Find the nearest club through the Mountain Biking Australia website. If not here then visit your local bike shop – or call them if you find it intimidating to walk in. Call a few shops because there are more and more women's riding groups.
14. Look into doing a skills clinics to learn more and expand your horizons a bit. There are some great women's only sessions these days that are a great way to build your confidence and meet some other women who ride. The [Odyssey Angel](#) pages on the event website list a few great groups.
15. How's your bike going? Unfortunately mountain biking is one of those sports where your gear makes a big difference to your enjoyment – the nicer your bike the more fun it is. If yours is a bit basic then line up a demo at shop to see what else is out there... you don't need to spend mega bucks but a new bike over \$1,000 is good starting point (look for disk brakes, 10

gears as a minimum, a comfy seat, front suspension and knobby tyres. Rear suspension is great but if your budget doesn't go that far that's fine).

16. You don't need a bike computer, GPS, heart rate monitor, clip in pedals, tubeless tyres or any of that other fancy stuff. Riding with flat pedals and your sneakers are perfectly fine. Don't over think it – just get out there and have some fun in the fresh air on your bike!
17. Book some accommodation for race day. Forrest is a small town and fills up pretty quick so why not shout yourself a weekend down the coast and stay at lovely Apollo Bay?!
18. Plan a half day away riding with your friends. It's exciting to go somewhere new but make sure it's on some mountain bike single tracks so you can get experience riding off-road. Look at the 'Trail Forks' app that has maps and information about heaps of riding areas. This is easy to use and gives you plenty of ideas where to ride.
19. With 1 month to go it'd be great to be riding 2-3 times a week if you can. Two of these rides can be just 30 mins long and on a stationary bike in the gym if that's all you can do, but try and do one ride a week that is 1-2hrs long – slowly getting longer in time so you have plenty of stamina.
20. It's totally OK to ride with a little bag if you want – to carry a rain jacket, phone, food, a few band aids and anything else you need. This can be a proper hydration backpack (there are some nice little ones out there these days) or just a simple backpack from home.
21. Can you get to Forrest for a pre-race day ride? It gives great peace of mind to go to the venue before race day so see if you can drop in for a visit. There are a few pre-race recce rides happening down there so try and hook up with those.
22. Read the event website again, the final event information is sent out to riders ~10 days beforehand that explains where to park your car, what time to get there, what you have to carry... Plan your gear and get excited!
23. Friends – don't give your friends FOMO, if they're not keen to ride, bring them along on race day to cheer you on and take photos for social! They could even drive on race morning so you can focus on more important things! If they're up for it – why not them into your accommodation and make a weekend of it, (they'll be plenty of eye-candy around at the race!)
24. Outfit – decide if you want to look like a Pro or just a cruiser and pick your outfit from something you have already (active wear, knicks or shorts and t-shirt) OR treat yourself to a fancy jersey and bike shorts from the bike store (why not look the part?!) – *'fake it till you make it, right?'*

Race day approaches:

25. Lovely legs – most racers ride in shorts (either bike shorts, or casual shorts) so best make some time to tidy up your legs race week – book a wax, and throw on some tanning cream so your legs look their best for your official race photos!
26. Hair – It's hard to know exactly how serious pro athletes are about how good their hair looks, but as the saying goes 'look good, feel good', so wash your hair the day/night before race day, and you'll be stylin' in your race day pics, (and have less to worry about race morning!)
27. Make-up – whether you're a fan or not – make sure to apply some sunscreen on race morning under your make-up. Go with waterproof mascara on race day – that way if you do sweat or it's rainy – there'll be no chance of panda eyes! Take some make-up with you for re-applying for presentations and post-race celebrations too – why not!
28. Prepare a bag of spare clothes to leave at the finish line - this can hold a change of clothes and shoes, more snacks, phone, some money for coffee / food, make-up and anything else you think you might need.
29. Keep an eye on the weather leading up to race day, to establish what you'll be riding in – if it is wet, you're going to get wet and muddy but that's all part of the fun – bring a lightweight waterproof jacket to ride in, and warm clothes in your spare bag
30. Go and have some fun – that's the bottom line – don't put pressure on yourself to ride far or fast or beat others... Simply enjoy the day, the atmosphere of being with others and the fact you are doing it. Be proud of yourself no matter how it goes because you've achieved your goal of doing your first MTB race and that's awesome!

Congratulations – you're just become an Odyssey Angel!

