

A FIRST-TIMER AT WINDHAM MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

By Allyson Macci



balance precariously on a mountain bike at the top of a steep hill. The sun is hot, beating down on me. Sweat drips slowly down my neck. Gripping the handlebars, heart pounding in my chest, I stare at the bottom of the slope. It's my first time on a mountain bike.

My instructor, Chris, tells me to lighten my grip. I nod my head. With a deep breath, I tip forward and roll down the hill. Wind rushes past my face. I am flying at the Windham Mountain Bike Park!

The Lesson. Windham Mountain Bike Park is a popular spot. As I walk to the Windham Mountain Bike rental shop, I watch bikers snake their way through a sea of emerald trees. The shop outfits me with knee pads, shin pads, helmet and padded jacket.

My lesson begins outside the rental shop. Chris starts with the basics: turning, braking and changing gears. He teaches me how to ride with my body hovering over the seat to be more balanced. Most importantly, Chris teaches me to lead



with my eyes, explaining where I look is where my bike will go.

When we try going downhill, I become anxious about losing control, but with Chris's encouragement, I can soon navigate a novice slope by myself.

The Practice Course. The bunny slope during ski season serves as the practice course. It's short but designed to mimic the terrain I'll find on the real trails. The edges are

TOP: COURTESY OF WINDHAM MOUNTAIN; LEFT/RIGHT: ALLYSON MACCI