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Longboard Safety

by Zach Lazzari, Demand Media



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*The longboard requires balance for control.*

The longboard is a skateboard with a large platform, designed to increase stability and ride at high speeds. The longboard doesn't allow the rider to perform the same tricks as on a standard skateboard, but it's ideal for traveling, commuting and chasing an adrenaline rush on steep hills with hairpin turns.

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Gear

Protective gear is a necessity for longboarding at high speeds. The beginner is especially prone to falls, and a helmet is critical for head [protection](#). Skateboarding bowl helmets are a common choice, but a full helmet with a face mask provides extra protection against head injury. Knee and elbow pads are also common to reduce bruising and cuts on asphalt and concrete. Experienced longboarders crouching and leaning on hard turns use their hands as a guide on the ground. Gloves with thick pads are designed specifically for touching the ground at speed. Longboarding also places the rider in contact with airborne particles, and sunglasses protect the eyes and prevent irritation from dust.

Course

The course is an import aspect of longboarding [safety](#). Car traffic is one of the major risks for longboarders. Courses that cross busy roads and intersections on downhill runs are dangerous, because stopping is difficult at a high speed. Longboarders are often tempted to run the intersection without stopping, and the accident risk is high. Plan a course that utilizes downhill sections without cross-traffic, and plan stops when an intersection is encountered. Beginners must practice stopping on a soft grade to prepare for the challenge of stopping at a fast speed when an obstacle is present.

Technique

Longboarding technique is not complex, but it requires balance to control the board. The board becomes increasingly unstable as the speed increases. The board wobbles and reacts to small changes on the ground, and the rider must have a comfortable and stable base position. Crouching in a low stance increases stability by lowering the center of gravity, and shifting the distribution of weight controls the direction of the board. The longboard is much safer for an experienced rider, because the level of control is high. Beginners must practice on low-to-moderate grades to gain confidence and increase safety.

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Supervision

Supervision increases safety, because help is immediately available after an accident. Ride in pairs and carry a cell phone to make emergency calls if necessary. Ride with partners who are safety-minded and not likely to push you into dangerous situations.

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References

- [Longboard Sidewalk; Longboard Safety Gear Part 2; March 2011](#)
- [Skate House Media; Coast Longboard Slide Jam and Safety Clinic; March 2011](#)

Resources

- [Longboard Loft NYC; Longboard Safety Equipment at the Longboard Loft NYC](#)

About the Author

Zach Lazzari is an outdoor writing specialist. He has experience in website writing as well as standard newspaper writing. He wrote an outdoor column for the Silver World in Lake City, Colo., and articles for Colorado-mountain-adventure.com. Lazzari is currently completing his bachelor's degree online through Arizona State University and lives in southwest Montana.

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