SOFTWARE & TECH

How To Ride A Penny Board

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Getting Started with Your First Penny Board

Learning **how to ride a penny board**is an exciting journey that combines balance, coordination, and a bit of courage. Unlike standard longboards or skateboards, penny boards are smaller, more portable, and feature a unique plastic deck that flexes under your feet. This guide will take you through every step, from choosing the right setup to cruising confidently down your favorite path. Whether you are a complete beginner or someone looking to refine your technique, this article will help you master the basics and ride with style.

Penny boards have gained massive popularity because of their lightweight design and vibrant colors. They are ideal for short commutes, campus travel, or simply having fun in the park. However, their small size and nimble nature mean they handle differently than larger boards. Understanding these differences is the first step toward becoming a confident rider. Let's break down everything you need to know.

Why Choose a Penny Board?

Before diving into the mechanics of **how to ride a penny board**, it helps to understand why so many riders prefer them. The plastic deck is more flexible than wood, which absorbs vibrations from rough pavement and makes for a smoother ride. The small wheels and narrow trucks make the board highly responsive, allowing for sharp turns and quick maneuvers. Additionally, penny boards are incredibly portable. They can easily fit inside a backpack, making them perfect for the last mile of your commute.

However, this portability comes with a learning curve. The reduced wheelbase means the board is less stable at high speeds compared to a longboard. Beginners often find the first few attempts wobbly, but with practice, the board becomes an extension of your body. The key is to start slow, stay relaxed, and focus on building muscle memory.

Essential Safety Gear Before You Start

Safety should always come first when learning **how to ride a penny board**. Because penny boards are small and twitchy, falls are common during the learning phase. Investing in proper gear will protect you from injuries and build your confidence.

- Helmet: A properly fitted skateboard or multi-sport helmet is non-negotiable. It protects your head from impact and sets a good example for others.
- Knee and Elbow Pads: These pads absorb the shock of falls and prevent scrapes. They are especially helpful when learning to balance and turn.
- Wrist Guards: When you fall, your natural instinct is to put your hands out. Wrist guards prevent sprains and fractures.
- Closed-Toe Shoes: Flat-soled shoes like skate shoes or sneakers provide the best grip and board feel. Avoid sandals or flip-flops.

Once you have your gear, find a flat, smooth, and open area to practice. An empty parking lot, a smooth basketball court, or a quiet street with minimal traffic is ideal. Avoid hills and crowded areas until you master the basics.

Understanding Your Penny Board's Anatomy

To learn **how to ride a penny board**effectively, you need to know its parts. This knowledge helps you make adjustments and understand how your movements affect the board.

- Deck: The plastic platform you stand on. Penny boards come in two main sizes: the original 22-inch and the larger 27-inch. Beginners often find the 27-inch more forgiving.
- Trucks: The metal T-shaped pieces that connect the wheels to the deck. They allow the board to turn when you lean.
- Wheels: Small, hard plastic wheels that roll smoothly on pavement. They are less suited for rough or gravel surfaces.
- Bearings: Inside the wheels, these allow the wheels to spin freely. Clean bearings make for a faster, smoother ride.
- Grip Tape: Most penny boards have a textured surface on top to keep your feet from slipping. Some have a clear or printed design.

Take a few minutes to inspect your board. Make sure the trucks are tight enough to prevent excessive wobble but loose enough to allow turning. Most beginners prefer tighter trucks initially for added stability.

Finding Your Stance

Your stance is the foundation of **how to ride a penny board**. There are two main stances: regular and goofy. Regular means your left foot is forward, and goofy means your right foot is forward. To find your natural stance, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and have someone gently push you from behind. The foot you step forward with is likely your front foot on the board.

Place your board on flat ground and step onto it with your front foot. Keep your front foot pointing forward, angled slightly toward the nose of the board. Your back foot should rest on the tail, perpendicular to the board. This position gives you the most control for pushing and steering.

Spend time just standing on the board. Feel how the plastic flexes. Shift your weight from your heels to your toes. Rock the board side to side to understand how the trucks respond. The more comfortable you are standing still, the easier the next steps will be.

The Proper Way to Push

Pushing is the most fundamental skill when learning **how to ride a penny board**. Here is the step-by-step process:

1. Place your front foot on the board, pointing forward. Keep your weight on this foot.
2. Bend your front knee slightly and keep your back foot on the ground, ready to push.
3. Using your back foot, push off the ground in a smooth, powerful stroke. Keep your eyes up and look where you want to go.
4. After pushing, bring your back foot onto the tail of the board. Turn your back foot so it is perpendicular to the board for stability.
5. Roll forward with both feet on the board. Keep your knees bent and your arms relaxed for balance.

A common mistake is pushing with your front foot. Always push with your back foot while keeping your front foot firmly planted. Practice pushing on flat ground until you can roll several feet without wobbling. Start with gentle pushes and gradually increase your speed as your confidence grows.

Maintaining Balance While Rolling

Once you are moving, balance becomes the next challenge in **how to ride a penny board**. Because the board is small, your body position matters more than on a longboard. Keep your shoulders parallel to the board and your knees slightly bent. This low center of gravity makes you more stable.

Your arms play a crucial role in balance. Let them hang naturally or hold them out slightly to the sides. If you feel yourself tipping, use your arms to counterbalance. Avoid looking down at your feet. Your body follows your eyes, so looking ahead helps you stay upright.

If the board starts to wobble, do not stiffen up. Stay relaxed and bend your knees deeper. The wobble usually comes from being too tense. Trust the board's design and let it flex beneath you.

Turning and Carving

Learning to turn is an exciting milestone in **how to ride a penny board**. Penny boards are designed for sharp turns, so even small weight shifts change your direction. There are two primary turning techniques: carving and kick turning.

Carving: This is the most natural way to turn. To carve left, lean slightly onto your left heel while keeping your shoulders facing forward. To carve right, lean onto your right toes. The more you lean, the sharper the turn. Practice wide, sweeping turns at slow speed first. Carving is smooth and flowy, perfect for cruising.

Kick Turning: This is a sharper, more aggressive turn used for tight spaces. Lift your front foot slightly and use your back foot to pivot the tail of the board. This technique takes practice but is useful for avoiding obstacles. Start by practicing on flat ground with the board stationary, then try it while rolling slowly.

Always keep your knees bent when turning. Bending your knees lowers your center of gravity and allows the trucks to respond more effectively.

How to Stop Safely

Knowing how to stop is just as important as knowing **how to ride a penny board**. There are three reliable stopping methods for beginners.

- Foot Brake: This is the simplest and most common method. While rolling, keep your front foot on the board and slowly lower your back foot to the ground. Drag your back foot lightly, applying gradual pressure until you come to a stop. Practice this on flat ground before attempting it at higher speeds.
- Heel Drag: Similar to the foot brake, but you drag your heel instead. This can be more stable for some riders. Slightly lift your toes and let your heel scrape the ground.
- Jump Off: If you need to stop quickly, you can jump off the board. Bend your knees, jump forward with both feet, and land on the ground while letting the board roll away. Practice this on grass first to avoid injury.

Avoid using the board's tail to stop (like a brake pad). Penny boards are plastic and can wear down quickly. The foot brake is your best friend as you learn.

Common Mistakes Beginners Make

When learning **how to ride a penny board**, certain errors are almost universal. Recognizing them early saves you frustration.

- Looking Down: Your eyes should always be on where you are going, not on your feet. Looking down throws off your balance and makes you more likely to fall.
- Stiff Knees: A rigid stance amplifies every bump and vibration. Keep your knees loose and springy to

absorb the terrain.

- Over-Tightening Trucks: While tight trucks feel stable at low speed, they make turning difficult. Find a balance that allows both stability and responsiveness.
- Pushing with the Front Foot: This is the most common beginner error. Always push with your back foot and keep your front foot planted.
- Riding Too Fast Too Soon: Speed comes with time. Start slow and build your skills incrementally.

Be patient with yourself. Penny boards have a steeper learning curve than larger boards, but once it clicks, the freedom and fun are unmatched.

Progressing to Intermediate Skills

Once you are comfortable with the basics of **how to ride a penny board**, you can start exploring more advanced techniques. These add versatility and style to your riding.

Riding on Slight Hills: Find a gentle slope and practice your carving and braking. Hills teach you speed control and edge awareness. Start at the bottom and work your way up to steeper sections.

Navigating Curbs: Start by rolling slowly toward a low curb. Lift your front foot slightly as you approach to hop the front wheels up, then shift your weight forward to bring the back wheels over. This takes timing but is very satisfying.

Tick-Tacking: This is a way to build momentum without pushing. With both feet on the board, pivot the nose back and forth in a zigzag motion. It is great for flat ground and tight spaces.

Sliding (Advanced): Sliding is a controlled skid used to shed speed quickly. It requires precise weight shifting and is best learned with protective gear and a grassy area to fall on.

Each of these skills builds on the foundation you have already established. Practice one at a time until they feel natural.

Caring for Your Penny Board

Your board will perform better and last longer with regular maintenance. This is an often-overlooked part of **how to ride a penny board** like a pro.

- Clean the Bearings: Dirt and grit slow down your wheels. Remove the bearings, wipe them clean, and apply a drop of speed lubricant every few weeks.

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