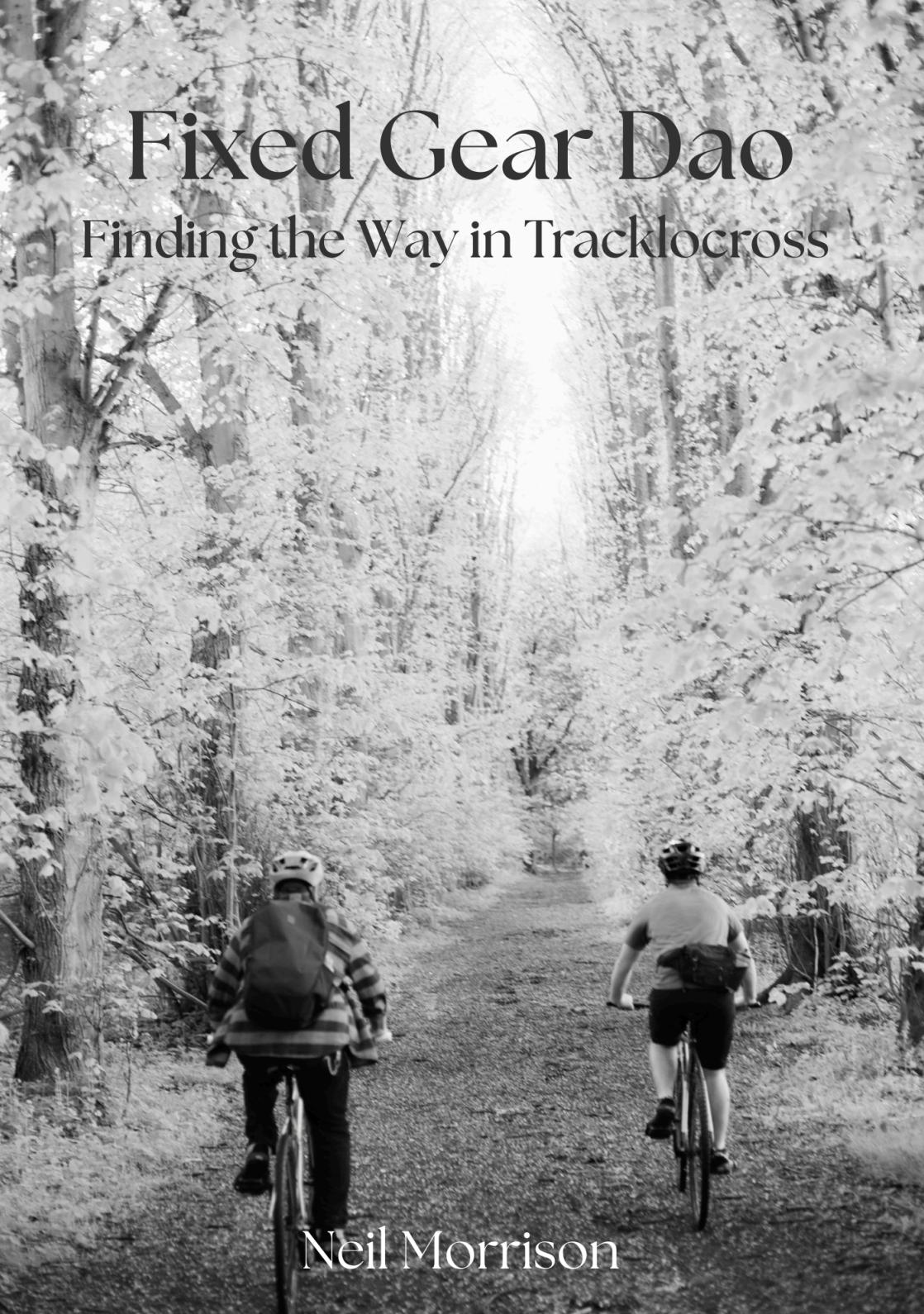


Fixed Gear Dao

Finding the Way in Tracklocross



Neil Morrison

Introduction: The Art of Letting Go (of Brakes)	4
Chapter 1: Wu Wei (Effortless Action) and Skid Stops	6
Chapter 2: The Dao of the Climb, You Have No Gears, Accept It	7
Chapter 3: Yin-Yang and the Gravel Gauntlet	8
Chapter 4: Letting Go (of Your Knees)	9
Chapter 5: The Fixed Mindset, Why Brakes Are an Illusion	10
Chapter 6: The Wheel of Samsara, The Eternal Loop of Pedalling	12
Chapter 7: Lǎozǐ Would Have Ridden Fixed, A Brief and Unnecessary History	13
Chapter 8: How to Fall with Style, Crashing with Grace	14
Chapter 9: Zen and the Art of Tyre Pressure	16
Chapter 10: The Tracklocross Aesthetic, Mud as a Fashion Statement	17
Chapter 11: The Fear and the Flow, Descending on a Fixed Gear	18
Chapter 12: Meditation in Motion, The Single Speed Mindset	20
Chapter 13: Fixie or Freewheel? The Existential Crisis of the Flip-Flop Hub	21
Chapter 14: Eating Dirt, Eating Humble Pie, The Role of Suffering in Riding	22
Chapter 15: Minimalism and the Fixed Gear	

Ethos,Owning Less, Riding More	23
Chapter 16: The Dao of Group Rides,Finding Harmony in Chaos	25
Key Principles of the Tracklocross Group Ride:	
25	
Chapter 17: The Legend of the Brakeless Courier,Fixed Gear in the City	27
Chapter 18: Hills, Humility, and Why Your Friends Hate Riding with You	29
Chapter 19: Building the Perfect Tracklocross Machine,A Guide to Simplicity	31
Step 1: Choose a Frame That Can Take a Beating	31
Step 2: The Gear Ratio Debate (Or, How Much Pain Do You Enjoy?)	31
Step 3: Tyres That Can Handle Poor Decisions	
31	
Step 4: The Handlebars Dilemma	32
Step 5: To Brake or Not to Brake?	32
Chapter 20: Mud, Blood, and Enlightenment,The Spiritual Side of Tracklocross	33
Chapter 21: How to Convince Your Friends That This Isn't a Terrible Idea	34
Common Arguments Against Fixed Gear Off-Road Riding (and How to Respond):	34
Chapter 22: Letting Go of the Destination,Why Every Ride is the Ride of a Lifetime	36
Chapter 23: Tracklocross and the Art of Mechanical Neglect	37
The Core Principles of Fixed Gear Bike Maintenance (Or Lack Thereof):	38

Chapter 24: The Philosophy of the Trackstand, Stillness in Motion	39
Chapter 25: The Flip-Flop Hub as a Metaphor for Life's Choices	41
Chapter 26: The Sacred Ritual of the Post-Ride Snack	43
The Five Levels of Post-Ride Hunger:	43
Chapter 27: The Ultimate Truth, You Were Never in Control to Begin With	45
Final Appendix: Fixie Wisdom for Everyday Life	47
The Fixed Gear Daoist Manifesto:	47
The Ride Never Ends	48

Introduction: The Art of Letting Go (of Brakes)

If you've ever found yourself bombing down a hill on a brakeless fixed gear bike, gripping the bars with the kind of desperation usually reserved for horror films, you've already learned your first Daoist lesson: just go with it.

Panic? That's resistance. Braking? Not an option.
Acceptance? That's the way.

Tracklocross, fixed gear bikes on off-road trails, sounds like a sport invented by a particularly deranged monk who got lost in the mountains for too long and decided, "You know what would make this more interesting? No freewheel." It's the perfect fusion of chaos and control, suffering and enlightenment, mud and transcendence.

This book is about *that way*.

It's about the philosophy of riding a bike that stubbornly refuses to coast, and the absurd yet profound truths that reveal themselves when you embrace the madness. It's about hills that demand humility, the Zen of eating gravel, and the curious peace that comes from realising you were never in control to begin with.

So, whether you're already a devoted tracklocross disciple or just someone who finds deep meaning in reckless decisions, welcome. Take a deep breath. Clip in. And let go (of your brakes, your ego, and possibly your sanity).

Chapter 1: Wu Wei (Effortless Action) and Skid Stops

Wu wei, the Daoist concept of effortless action, is one of those things that sounds impossible until you experience it. It's like trying to float in water: if you struggle, you sink. If you relax, you rise.

For fixed gear riders, this is best exemplified by the *skid stop*.

A perfect skid stop is not a fight with physics. It's a conversation. Too much panic, too much tension, and the rear wheel locks up like a stubborn mule, sending you into an uncontrolled mess of rubber, rubbish, and regret. But get it right? A gentle shift in weight, a subtle lean, and suddenly you're sliding effortlessly to a stop, preferably before you T-bone a pedestrian.

The trick is not to *force* it. Skidding is an art, not a wrestling match with your drivetrain. It's about letting go of the need for complete control and trusting that the bike, your loyal, masochistic steed, knows what it's doing.

Of course, if you skid too long, your tyre will cease to exist. Everything in balance.

Chapter 2: The Dao of the Climb, You Have No Gears, Accept It

A geared cyclist reaches a hill and shifts down. A fixed gear rider reaches a hill and shifts *internally*.

There is no escape. There is only acceptance.

The first stage of the climb is denial. *Maybe I can spin my way up this!* The second stage is anger. *WHY DID I CHOOSE THIS BIKE?* The third is bargaining. *If I make it up this hill, I swear I'll buy a real bike with gears and brakes like a normal person.* Then comes depression, which is usually the part where you start losing feeling in your legs.

And then, if you're lucky, comes acceptance. You stop fighting the incline. You become part of it. The pain is inevitable, so you lean into it. And suddenly, miraculously, the hill has already become the descent.

It's classic Daoism: everything contains its opposite. The struggle leads to ease. But only if you let it.

Or, if you don't, well... you'll probably just fall over sideways like a confused turtle.

Chapter 3: Yin-Yang and the Gravel Gauntlet

Tracklocross is the embodiment of yin and yang, the balance of opposites.

Speed and control. Pain and pleasure. The soft give of dirt and the harsh slap of gravel when you inevitably eat it.

One moment, you're weightless, floating over roots like an enlightened being. The next, a misjudged turn sends you airborne. But isn't that life? Harmony is not about avoiding the fall, it's about knowing that the fall is part of the ride.

It's also about knowing that if you fall in front of your friends, they will *never* let you forget it.

Chapter 4: Letting Go (of Your Knees)

Every fixed gear rider, at some point, has heard the prophecy: *riding fixed will destroy your knees.*

Daoism teaches that clinging to life is what brings suffering, so perhaps resisting the inevitable fate of your cartilage is the real problem.

Jokes aside, letting go doesn't mean recklessness. It means adaptation, learning to use momentum rather than brute force, spinning instead of grinding. A tracklocross rider with the wisdom of the Dao knows that resisting the pedals is futile. Flow with them, and your knees might just survive another day.

If not? Well, knee braces exist for a reason.

Chapter 5: The Fixed Mindset, Why Brakes Are an Illusion

The ultimate truth of fixed gear riding is that control is a lie.

Brakes give the illusion of safety. Gears provide the illusion of choice. Suspension forks give the illusion of forgiveness. But a fixed gear setup strips it all away, leaving you with nothing but the raw connection between body, bike, and terrain.

This is a terrifying thing to realise when you hit your first major descent. There is no 'taking it easy'. You can't just feather the brakes and coast down like some relaxed Sunday cruiser. Oh no, you are in it. Fully committed. Every muscle tensed, every synapse firing, your knees doing that weird panicky micro-adjustment thing where they desperately try to find a comfortable cadence.

And here's the thing: the moment you *stop fighting* it, it all makes sense.

Daoism tells us to surrender to the flow of the universe. Fixed gear riding teaches the same, once you stop fighting the road, you begin to understand it.

You don't force a descent, you work with it. You don't panic about speed, you adjust to it. There's no

emergency stop, only a gentle, controlled slowing of the pedals, an acceptance of momentum, a careful, zen-like engagement with the machine beneath you.

Or, if you really need to stop in a hurry, you can always launch yourself into a conveniently placed bush.

Chapter 6: The Wheel of Samsara, The Eternal Loop of Pedalling

In Buddhism, *samsara* is the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In fixed gear riding, it is the endless cycle of *pedalling*.

You pedal to go forward. You pedal to slow down. You pedal when you really, really don't want to pedal anymore. There is no freewheeling, no moment of respite. Even if you're too tired to function, your legs must keep moving.

And that's kind of beautiful, in a way.

The modern world is full of distractions, endless choices, the ability to *opt out* of difficulty at the push of a button. But not here. Not on a fixed gear bike. You are in it, fully engaged, every moment an unbroken link in the chain of motion.

It's exhausting. It's liberating. It's weirdly meditative.

It's also why every fixed gear rider has a love-hate relationship with long rides.

Chapter 7: Lǎozǐ Would Have Ridden Fixed,A Brief and Unnecessary History

Lǎozǐ, the legendary sage and founder of Daoism, spent much of his life pondering the mysteries of existence and writing the *Dao De Jing*. What many people *don't* know is that he would absolutely have been a fixed gear rider if bikes had existed in 6th century BCE China.

Think about it:

- He preached simplicity. Fixed gear bikes are the simplest form of bicycle.
- He spoke of letting go of attachments. What are brakes if not an attachment to the illusion of safety?
- He talked about finding harmony in movement. Riding fixed is all about harmony,between rider, machine, and terrain.

Would he have been good at tracklocross? Probably not. But you can guarantee he would've skidded down a rocky descent, crashed gloriously, stood up, nodded sagely, and said, *This was meant to happen.*

That, or he'd have invented knee pads.

Chapter 8: How to Fall with Style, Crashing with Grace

Falling is inevitable.

Let's get that out of the way now. If you ride tracklocross long enough, you *will* hit the dirt. Possibly a tree. Maybe a burnt out car.

The key is learning how to do it well.

There are two types of riders in the world: those who fall stiff and panicked, and those who roll with it. Guess which ones usually walk away unscathed?

The secret to crashing gracefully is simple:

1. **Don't resist the fall.** The more you stiffen up, the more bones you break.
2. **Tuck and roll.** If possible, aim to distribute the impact. The ground is hard. Your face is soft. Try to use the ground *wisely*.
3. **Laugh it off.** If you're not seriously injured, your best move is to immediately start laughing. It confuses onlookers and makes you seem like some kind of chaotic deity.
4. **Check your bike before your body.** This isn't *technically* the right priority, but let's be honest, it's what we all do.

Most importantly, wear your scars with pride. A tracklocross rider without a few battle wounds is just a commuter with commitment issues.

Chapter 9: Zen and the Art of Tyre Pressure

There is an eternal debate among tracklocross riders: what is the *ideal* tyre pressure?

Too high, and you bounce off rocks like an overexcited kangaroo. Too low, and you might as well be riding on wet spaghetti.

The perfect pressure is *out there*, somewhere between 'efficient rolling' and 'I'm just here to absorb the suffering'.

Much like the balance of yin and yang, it's an interplay between softness and firmness, between grip and speed, between 'this is fine' and 'this is definitely not fine'.

You will never truly find it. You will spend your entire riding life adjusting, tweaking, experimenting, convinced that *this time*, you've nailed it, only to realise, five minutes into the ride, that you've made a terrible mistake.

And that's okay. Tyre pressure, like life, is an eternal work in progress.

Chapter 10: The Tracklocross Aesthetic, Mud as a Fashion Statement

If you're doing tracklocross right, you should never have clean clothes.

Your socks? Filthy. Your shorts? Covered in mud. Your jersey? Torn from that time you miscalculated a turn and landed in a hedge.

Tracklocross is not a glamorous sport. There are no shiny kits, no pristine bikes, no post-ride espressos in boutique cafés. There is only dirt, sweat, and an ever-present feeling that you are a child who just got let loose in the woods with a slightly-too-dangerous toy.

And that's exactly how it should be.

Because at the end of the day, this isn't about looking cool. It's about feeling free.

Chapter 11: The Fear and the Flow, Descending on a Fixed Gear

There are only two kinds of fixed gear riders: those who think they know how to descend brakeless, and those who have actually *done it* and are currently questioning all of their life choices.

Descending on a fixed gear bike is not a casual experience. It is a commitment. There's no coasting, no 'I'll just take it easy and let gravity do the work'. Gravity is *not* your friend. Gravity is a sadistic drill sergeant demanding that your legs keep spinning faster and faster while your internal organs quietly scream.

The first time you experience an uncontrolled descent, you will go through the following stages:

1. **Denial:** *This isn't so bad. I can handle this.*
2. **Realisation:** *Oh no. No, no, no, no.*
3. **Panic:** *My legs are moving faster than I knew was physically possible.*
4. **Existential crisis:** *Is this how I die? Will they put 'skidded into the abyss' on my tombstone?*
5. **Acceptance:** *Well, I guess this is my life now.*

But once you get past the terror, something magical happens.

You find *flow*.

Your body and bike stop being separate entities. The spinning of the cranks, the rhythm of your legs, the pull of the terrain, it all merges into one seamless motion. You stop *fighting* the descent and start *moving* with it. The fear doesn't disappear, but it transforms into something else: exhilaration.

This is when you realise the great truth of the fixed gear descent: it was never about controlling the speed. It was about *learning to dance with it*.

Of course, if that fails, you can always just throw yourself into a conveniently placed bush.

Chapter 12: Meditation in Motion, The Single Speed Mindset

In a world of endless distractions, decisions, and notifications, a fixed gear bike is a rare and precious thing: it simplifies life.

You don't have to think about shifting gears. You don't have to debate whether you're in the right cadence. You just ride. The only options are move or stop moving.

This is why riding fixed can feel like meditation.

At first, it's all about suffering. Your legs burn, your lungs scream, your knees file a formal complaint with your brain. But then, somewhere in the rhythm of endless pedalling, your thoughts start to quiet.

The world shrinks down to a simple, primal cycle: push, pull, push, pull. Breathe in, breathe out. One with the road.

This is the beauty of the single speed mindset: the *absence* of choice can sometimes be the most freeing thing in the world.

Unless you're at the bottom of a massive hill. In which case, choice would actually be quite nice.

Chapter 13: Fixie or Freewheel? The Existential Crisis of the Flip-Flop Hub

Every fixed gear rider, at some point, faces the great philosophical dilemma: should I flip the wheel?

On one side, the freewheel, a tempting mirage, a whisper of an easier life. On the other, the fixed cog, pure, brutal, unforgiving.

Many a rider has installed a flip-flop hub with noble intentions: I'll ride fixed most of the time, but I'll keep the freewheel option for emergencies.

And yet, deep down, we all know the truth:

Once you've gone fully brakeless, freewheel feels like cheating.

Sure, it's nice to coast occasionally, but something feels wrong. The absolute connection between bike and rider, the thing that makes fixed gear riding so special, disappears. Suddenly, you're just riding a bike.

And if we wanted to just ride a bike, we wouldn't have chosen a machine that forces us to pedal downhill like maniacs in the first place.

Chapter 14: Eating Dirt, Eating Humble Pie, The Role of Suffering in Riding

Pain is inevitable.

In tracklocross, you will crash. You will get lost. You will reach a hill so steep that your lungs refuse to cooperate. And somewhere in the midst of all that, you will ask yourself: Why am I doing this?

The answer, of course, is that suffering builds character.

Falling off a brakeless bike teaches you humility in ways that self-help books never could. Pushing up a brutal climb with no gears forces you to confront the limits of your ego. Skidding into a ditch and emerging covered in mud gives you a newfound appreciation for gravity and its lack of mercy.

This is the truth that all fixed gear riders eventually learn: pain is not the enemy. Resistance is.

The more you try to avoid suffering, the worse it feels. But if you lean into it, accept it, even laugh at it, it transforms. Suddenly, it's just part of the ride.

And, if nothing else, it makes for a great story later.

Chapter 15: Minimalism and the Fixed Gear Ethos, Owning Less, Riding More

There is a certain beauty in riding a bike that has as few parts as possible.

No derailleurs. No unnecessary cables. No fifteen-speed drivetrain that requires a mechanic's degree to adjust. Just a frame, two wheels, a crankset, and a stubborn refusal to acknowledge modern cycling technology.

This is what makes fixed gear riding special: it strips away everything unnecessary.

It's not just about the bike. It's about the mindset.

- Do you really need a high-tech GPS, or can you just ride and see where you end up?
- Do you really need a training app, or can you just listen to your legs?
- Do you really need that extra cappuccino, or... wait, no, you probably do.

Minimalism is not about deprivation. It's about freedom. The less you own, the less you have to worry about.

The road is your route. The bike is your tool. Everything else? Optional.

Well, except maybe snacks. Snacks are never optional.

Chapter 16: The Dao of Group Rides, Finding Harmony in Chaos

Riding solo is a meditative experience. Riding in a group is... *different*.

There is an art to surviving a fixed gear group ride. It involves patience, awareness, and an iron stomach for questionable mid-ride snacks.

Key Principles of the Tracklocross Group Ride:

1. **Skid etiquette.** If you're going to brake by skidding, make sure the person behind you is *not* directly in the blast zone.
2. **No one waits for the fixie rider on a climb.**
This is the cold, harsh reality of life. Your geared friends will fly past you, and you will just have to *accept your fate*.
3. **Gravity is not your friend, but it is inevitable.**
If there's a downhill section, *pray*.
4. **Never admit that you're exhausted.** Just smile, grit your teeth, and hope that someone else suggests a rest stop before you pass out.
5. **Mid-ride snacks are sacred.** If you're the one who packed extra food, you are now the spiritual leader of the ride.

The best group rides feel like an oddly dysfunctional family outing: chaotic, slightly painful, and full of inside jokes that only make sense if you were there.

And if you weren't? Well, just come along next time.

Chapter 17: The Legend of the Brakeless Courier, Fixed Gear in the City

Before tracklocross hipsters started yeeting (I see my children cringing) themselves down rocky trails on brakeless bikes, there was another, equally reckless fixed gear subculture: the bike messenger.

The urban courier, weaving through traffic with nothing but a steel frame, a single gear, and an almost philosophical disregard for self-preservation, is a creature of legend. These are the people who looked at

a system designed for multi-lane, high-speed automotive transport and said, Yeah, but what if I just threaded through it at full tilt with no brakes?

To ride fixed in a city is to become the city.

The flow of traffic is not an obstacle, it's a river, and you are a leaf floating upon its currents. Taxis honk, pedestrians step into your path, and delivery trucks open their doors directly in your trajectory. But you do not react. You anticipate.

Daoism teaches that the best way to survive chaos is not to resist it, but to move with it.

A fixed gear courier knows this instinctively. The moment you stop trying to control the ride is the moment you achieve enlightenment, or at least make it to your delivery point in one piece.

(Just don't get doored. That's the opposite of enlightenment.)

Chapter 18: Hills, Humility, and Why Your Friends Hate Riding with You

Every fixed gear rider has that one friend, the one with a full carbon road bike, electronic shifting, and a slight but unmistakable look of pity when they realise you've shown up to a 100km ride with a single gear and no brakes.

They will ask, gently, "Are you sure you want to do this?"

They will try to wait for you on climbs.

They will eventually give up waiting for you on climbs.

And, most importantly, they will hate you on descents.

A geared cyclist sees a descent as a chance to relax. A fixed gear cyclist sees a descent as a desperate battle against physics. There is no coasting. There is no break. There is only the endless, horrifying cadence of legs spinning so fast they could theoretically create electricity.

Your friends will laugh at first. Then they will realise you are serious. Then they will just pretend you don't exist until you all reach the bottom.

And that's fine. You didn't choose this life because it was easy.

You chose it because suffering builds character.

(Or at least, that's what you tell yourself while gasping for breath at the top of yet another hill.)

Chapter 19: Building the Perfect Tracklocross Machine,A Guide to Simplicity

The beauty of a tracklocross bike is that less is more. No derailleurs. No complicated drivetrain. No suspension. Just a frame, two wheels, and your questionable decision-making skills.

But what makes the perfect tracklocross build?

Step 1: Choose a Frame That Can Take a Beating

You will crash. Accept this. Your bike needs to survive your mistakes. A steel frame is ideal,tough, slightly forgiving, and easy to repair. Carbon? Too fancy. Aluminium? Acceptable but less forgiving.

Step 2: The Gear Ratio Debate (Or, How Much Pain Do You Enjoy?)

- **42x16:** For those who love to see the world.
- **46x18:** A balanced choice, enough resistance for control, but not *completely* masochistic.
- **50x14:** Do you *hate* your knees?

Step 3: Tyres That Can Handle Poor Decisions

- **Skinny slicks?** You're going to have a bad time.
- **Full MTB tyres?** Overkill, but hilarious.
- **Something in between?** Probably the smartest choice, but where's the fun in that?

Step 4: The Handlebars Dilemma

- **Drop bars:** Classic, but questionable off-road.
- **Riser bars:** Better control, better comfort, still completely unhinged in concept.
- **Bullhorns:** Because looking cool is half the battle.

Step 5: To Brake or Not to Brake?

Some people run a front brake. Some people don't.

Some people used to run a front brake, then decided they liked the thrill of imminent danger.

Ultimately, it's up to you. Just remember: the laws of physics do not care about your personal aesthetic choices.

Chapter 20: Mud, Blood, and Enlightenment, The Spiritual Side of Tracklocross

It's easy to laugh at the absurdity of throwing a brakeless bike into a forest.

But somewhere between the suffering, the skidding, and the swearing, something happens.

You stop thinking. You stop worrying. You just ride.

You feel the dirt beneath your tyres, the air rushing past your face, the sheer, unfiltered reality of the moment. And suddenly, everything makes sense.

This is why we ride.

Not to win races. Not to be the fastest. But to be here, fully and completely, in a world that constantly tries to pull us away from the present.

A muddy, reckless, chaotic meditation on two wheels.

And if that's not Dao, I don't know what is.

Chapter 21: How to Convince Your Friends That This Isn't a Terrible Idea

So you've discovered tracklocross. You're enlightened. You're ready. But there's one problem:

Your friends think you've lost your mind.

Common Arguments Against Fixed Gear Off-Road Riding (and How to Respond):

“You’ll crash.”

- Correct. But that's part of the experience.

“You don’t even have gears!”

- Gears are a crutch. A trap. An illusion. Besides, have you ever tried internally shifting your soul instead?

“You’re going to wreck your knees.”

- Maybe. But suffering builds character.

“This is stupid.”

- Yes. But fun stupid.

Your best strategy? Just take them on one ride. If they survive, they’ll understand. If they don’t, well... at least you tried.

Chapter 22: Letting Go of the Destination, Why Every Ride is the Ride of a Lifetime

Fixed gear riding has a way of breaking down the concept of 'progress'.

There's no finishing line, no 'leveling up', no point where you suddenly become an expert. You just ride. Some days you suffer. Some days you flow. But the goal isn't to get somewhere.

It's to be somewhere.

Every pedal stroke, every climb, every moment of sheer panic on a brakeless descent, it's all part of the same, endless, ridiculous journey.

And, if you're lucky, you realise that this, this stupid, beautiful, terrifying, exhilarating thing, is exactly where you're meant to be.

It was always about the ride.

Chapter 23: Tracklocross and the Art of Mechanical Neglect

Or, How to Love Your Bike While Abusing It Daily

A normal cyclist might finish a ride, wipe down their chain, check their tyre pressure, and gently cradle their bike like it's a newborn child.

A tracklocross rider? We just hope for the best.

There's a certain... philosophy to maintaining a fixed gear bike. Some might call it 'laziness', but I prefer to think of it as an appreciation for impermanence.

Everything breaks eventually. Your bearings will seize, your bottom bracket will creak, your chain will stretch to unholly lengths. And yet, somehow, your bike will still roll.

And if it rolls, it's fine.

The Core Principles of Fixed Gear Bike Maintenance (Or Lack Thereof):

1. **If it ain't broke, don't fix it.**
 - And if it is broken, can you still ride it? If yes, don't fix it yet.
2. **Chain lube is a suggestion, not a rule.**
 - Bonus points if your drivetrain sounds like a haunted house door hinge.
3. **Tyres should have *some* air.**
 - Exactly how much is a mystery best left to fate.
4. **Your bike will never be 'silent'.**
 - Embrace the creaks, groans, and occasional death rattles. They are part of its personality.

Some might say this attitude leads to premature wear and catastrophic mechanical failure. And they would be absolutely correct.

But would Lǎozi have worried about a squeaky chain?

No. He would have let it be.

(And then he probably crashed because his headset came loose.)

Chapter 24: The Philosophy of the Trackstand, Stillness in Motion

If there is one skill that separates the casual fixed gear rider from the enlightened master, it is the trackstand.

To balance motionless on a fixed gear bike is to understand the fundamental paradox of existence:

- *You are not moving, yet you are never completely still.*
- You are constantly adjusting, yet perfectly at rest.
- You are calm on the outside, but internally screaming in case you topple over in front of a group of cool messengers.

A good trackstand is an act of pure presence. There is no looking back, no looking forward, only the *now*.

The moment you think too hard about it, you wobble.

The moment you doubt yourself, you fall.

The moment you try to ‘force’ balance, it disappears.

This is *. The best trackstanders don't just *hold* balance, they *become* balance. They are the still point in the chaos, the unmoving centre of the storm.*

(And if that fails, they do the awkward little hop-reposition-try-again shuffle and pretend nothing happened.)

Chapter 25: The Flip-Flop Hub as a Metaphor for Life's Choices

We've already discussed the existential crisis that is the flip-flop hub. But let's go deeper.

The fixed cog and the freewheel are not just mechanical options. They are two opposing philosophies.

- The fixed cog is commitment. It is total engagement with reality. It is suffering and discipline and the path of enlightenment through sheer, unrelenting effort.
- The freewheel is illusion. It is the easy way out, the comforting lie of choice, the belief that we can coast through life without consequences.

Every fixed gear rider who installs a flip-flop hub *thinks* they will use the freewheel side. They *believe* they will give themselves an easy day.

And yet, time and time again, they find themselves flipping back to the fixed cog.

Why?

Because deep down, they know the truth:

There is no easy way.

There is only *the way*.

(Also, freewheel feels weird after a while. Like, why are my cranks not moving? What sorcery is this?)

Chapter 26: The Sacred Ritual of the Post-Ride Snack

Cycling is a spiritual practice. But if there is one true *religion* of tracklocross, it is eating absurd amounts of food after suffering through a ride.

Daoism teaches us to live in harmony with nature. It also teaches us to accept the cycles of feast and famine.

And let's be honest, *if you're riding fixed off-road, you are constantly in a state of famine.*

The moment a tracklocross ride ends, the primal hunger begins. All logic disappears. Your only instinct is *consume*.

The Five Levels of Post-Ride Hunger:

1. **Mild Peasant Hunger:** *"I'll just have a banana."*
2. **Moderate Carb Deficiency:** *"I need a sandwich. Possibly two."*
3. **Severe Caloric Depletion:** *"WHERE IS THE NEAREST PIZZA?"*
4. **Full Existential Crisis:** *"Is it socially acceptable to drink olive oil straight from the bottle?"*
5. **Enlightenment:** *"I am at peace, but only because I have eaten 3,000 calories in one sitting."*

Daoists believe in *wu wei*, effortless action. And what is *eating an entire loaf of bread* after a long ride if not effortless action in its purest form?

Chapter 27: The Ultimate Truth, You Were Never in Control to Begin With

Everything we have covered in this book leads to **one final, inevitable realisation**:

You were never in control.

The gears? Gone. The brakes? Optional. The terrain? Unforgiving.

You pedal forward, but the bike chooses its own path. You climb hills, but the hills decide how much suffering they require in return. You descend, but gravity *alone* dictates your fate.

And at a certain point, you stop resisting.

You stop trying to control the ride.

You stop thinking about every pedal stroke.

You simply... let go.

Not physically, please, for the love of Lǎozǐ, do not actually let go of the handlebars, but *spiritually*.

You surrender to the flow of the ride.

You realise that skidding out on gravel, blowing through a turn too fast, and rolling up to a café covered in mud are *all part of the experience*.

And in that moment, you reach true enlightenment.

Fixed Gear Dao.

The way of the brakeless, the suffering, and the absurd.

And now, my friend, you are ready to ride.

Final Appendix: Fixie Wisdom for Everyday Life

(Or, What We Can Learn from People Who Refuse to Ride Normal Bikes)

The Fixed Gear Daoist Manifesto:

- “Life is like riding brakeless down a hill, you don’t stop, you just adapt.”
- “What goes up must come down, but first it must suffer.”
- “Control is an illusion. Learn to skid.”
- “Pain is temporary. Knee injuries are forever.”
- “If you crash, laugh. If someone else crashes, laugh harder.”
- “Eat. Then eat more.”
- “There is no destination. Only the ride.”

The Ride Never Ends

Daoism doesn't give answers, it just points at the path.

Fixed gear riding does the same.

No destination, no grand goal. Just the endless, ridiculous, beautiful loop of pedalling.

So, clip in. Let go. Accept the suffering.

And remember:

You are *never* in control.

But that's okay.

Because neither is anyone else.

If you would like to support:

<https://ko-fi.com/fiefdomtracklocross>