



**“TAKE YOUR HEAD AND RUB IT ALONG GRAVEL. HOW DOES THAT FEEL? NOW DO THAT AGAIN WEARING A HELMET. FEEL THE DIFFERENCE?..”**

**Champion trials rider Rich Johnson takes his two wheels to the limit – so, more than anyone else, he knows the importance of cycle safety**



Rich can pull some amazing stunts but he'll never do them without safety equipment

**T**here isn't much Rich Johnson can't do on two wheels. He's seen, done it... and got the bruises.

As one of Britain's best extreme bikers, his displays of jumps, drops, and tricks are something you won't see often.

“Aged 12, I started BMX racing because it was the biggest thing in the country. Then mountain bikes were invented and I wrecked about five of them because I was trying to do BMX stuff,” recalls Rich.

Twenty years on and the 32-year-old still rides more than 40km everyday and constantly practises the tricks for which he's famed.

“You start small and put pieces together. If you can do a trick 10cm off the floor all day, then it shouldn't be any different at 2m,” says Rich.

Yet for all Rich's love of taking things to the edge, safety is at the centre of everything he does. It's something he's passionate about having seen first-hand the tragedy caused

by a lack of safety equipment.

“There was someone who does what I do, trial riding. He had been working a bench for three hours, doing different tricks, then took off his helmet because he was hot. He did one last trick, got it wrong, hit his head and he died.”

It's something Rich doesn't want to witness ever again. “Take your head and rub it along gravel. How does that feel? Now do that again with a helmet. Feel the difference? It's a no-brainer – wear a helmet or suffer the consequences.

“Look,” he says, “we are the professionals who do it every day and know what can happen because we've had to pick up our mates off the floor. So, there's an easy way and there's a hard way – you can opt for the easy way and take someone's advice or you can take the hard way... And if you're lucky, you might live to have another go.”

Coming from a guy who loves taking two wheels to the limit, you'd be dumb not to heed Rich's words.



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