A SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDE

TRANSITION: THE NEXT STEPS

Pumping, dropping in, rock to fakie and your first stalls on ramps, bowls and quarterpipes

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TRANSITION

READ IT ON YOUR PHONE



TAPE 06 / BOWL

00 TRANSITION: THE NEXT STEPS

BEFORE WE START

Transition is any skating on curved surfaces: quarterpipes, mini ramps, halfpipes and bowls. It feels different from street. Instead of popping onto things, you're riding up walls, using gravity and learning to stay on top of a moving board.

This book picks up after *Your First Tricks*, where you learned to carve and kickturn. If those aren't comfortable yet, spend more time there first. Everything here builds on them.

What's inside:

- [ ] Speaking transition: the parts of a ramp
- [ ] Pumping: going faster without pushing
- [ ] Dropping in
- [ ] Rock to fakie
- [ ] Axle stalls and 50-50s on coping
- [ ] Frontside and backside, explained
- [ ] Bowls and carving the corners
- [ ] Park flow and sharing the ramp
- [ ] A progression plan

Safety first: transition hurts when you fall wrong. Wear a helmet, and pads are a great idea while you learn (especially knee pads). Learn to knee slide out of falls on ramps: drop to your knee pads and slide down the transition instead of running out or falling backward.

SPEAKING TRANSITION

A few words you'll hear a lot.

- **Transition (tranny):** the curved part of a ramp.
- **Flat bottom:** the flat area at the bottom between two walls.
- **Vert:** the part at the top of a tall ramp that's straight up and down. Mini ramps don't have any.
- **Coping:** the metal pipe or edge along the top of the ramp.
- **Deck (platform):** the flat area at the top, where you stand before dropping in.
- **Lip:** the top edge of the transition, where the coping is.
- **Quarterpipe:** a single curved wall.
- **Mini ramp / halfpipe:** two walls facing each other with flat bottom between.
- **Bowl:** a curved, pool-like shape with walls on several sides.

PUMPING

Pumping is how you gain speed on transition without pushing. It's the most important transition skill, and it feels weird at first.

The idea

As you go **down** a wall, you push down into the board, like you're standing up hard. As you go **up** a wall, you relax and let your knees bend. That push-and-relax rhythm adds speed every time.

Practice it on a mini ramp

01 Start in the flat bottom, rolling toward one wall.

02 Ride up the wall a little, then come back down fakie.

03 As you go down the wall, stand up strong and press into the board.

04 As you reach the flat and start up the other wall, crouch a bit.

05 Repeat. Back and forth.

Signs it's working

You'll go a little higher on each wall without pushing. At first it might only be a few inches. That's normal. Keep at it.

Common mistake

Pumping at the wrong time. If you push down while going *up* the wall, you'll slow yourself down. Push on the way down, relax on the way up.

DROPPING IN

Dropping in is going from the deck at the top of a ramp into the transition. It's scary the first time, and then it's not.

Start small

Find the smallest ramp you can, like a little quarterpipe or a low mini ramp. Don't learn this on a big ramp.

The steps

01 Put your tail on the coping, with the back wheels hanging over the edge behind you and the board pointing into the ramp.

02 Hold the tail down with your back foot so the board stays put.

03 Put your front foot on the front bolts.

04 **Lean forward.** This is the key. Push your weight onto your front foot, over the nose, toward the ramp.

05 Let the front wheels touch the transition, and ride down.

The number one mistake

Leaning back. When you're scared, your body wants to lean away from the drop. If you do, the board shoots out in front of you and you fall backward. Lean forward, commit, and stay over the board.

Get help

Have a friend stand next to you and hold your hand the first few times. It helps a lot.

ROCK TO FAKIE

A rock to fakie is riding up to the top of the ramp, rocking the front of your board over the coping, and coming back down backward (fakie).

The steps

01 Pump up the wall with enough speed to reach the coping.

02 As your front wheels reach the top, lift them slightly and set the middle of your board on the coping. Your front wheels go onto the deck, your back wheels stay on the transition.

03 Pause for a moment.

04 Lift your front wheels back up over the coping by pressing the tail slightly.

05 Ride back down fakie, with your weight centered.

Tips

- **Don't let your back wheels touch the coping.** Only the middle of your board should be on it.
- **Look at where you're going.** As you come back down, look down the ramp.
- **Lean into the ramp on the way back down,** not away from it. Same lesson as dropping in.

Rock and roll

Once rock to fakie is solid, try a **rock and roll**: instead of coming back down fakie, turn your board 180 degrees as you come off the coping and ride down forward. It's a kickturn on the coping.

AXLE STALLS AND 50-50S ON COPING

These are the first real "lip tricks," where your trucks sit on the coping.

Backside axle stall

01 Ride up the wall at an angle with your back to the deck.

02 As you reach the top, turn so both trucks land on the coping (your back truck first, then your front truck).

03 Pause with both trucks on the coping, your weight over the board.

04 Turn your front wheels back into the ramp and ride down.

Frontside axle stall

Same idea, but you go up facing the deck. Many people find frontside easier to see and harder to commit to. Try both.

50-50 grind

A 50-50 grind is an axle stall where you keep moving along the coping. You need a bit more speed and a little more angle.

Tips

- **Weight over the board.** If you lean too far into the ramp, you'll slip in. Too far onto the deck and you'll hang up.

- [ ] **Get both trucks on.** It's easy to only get the back truck on at first. Practice until both lock in.
- [ ] **Be ready to bail.** If it feels wrong, knee slide down the transition.

FRONTSIDE AND BACKSIDE, EXPLAINED

These two words confuse everyone at first.

- **Frontside:** your chest (front of your body) faces the wall or obstacle as you do the trick.
- **Backside:** your back faces the wall or obstacle.

So a frontside kickturn on a ramp means you turn toward your toe side, facing the wall. A backside kickturn means you turn toward your heel side, with your back to it.

The same idea applies everywhere: grinds, slides, airs. If you ever get confused, ask yourself: "Is my chest or my back facing the obstacle?"

BOWLS AND CARVING THE CORNERS

Bowls feel like a whole different world. The walls curve around you, and you can ride a full loop without stopping.

Start with carving

A **carve** is a long, smooth turn along a curved wall. In a bowl, carving around corners is how you keep moving.

01 Ride around the bowl at a steady speed.

02 As you reach a corner, lean into the turn (toward your toes or heels).

03 Let the bowl's curve guide you around.

04 Pump on the way down each section to keep speed.

Look where you want to go

Your board goes where you look. In a bowl, look ahead around the corner, not at the wall right in front of you.

Find the line

Every bowl has natural lines: paths that flow from one wall to the next. Watch other skaters to see where they go. Then try following one.

Keep it smooth

Bowls reward smooth skating. Big jerky turns kill your speed. Smooth carves and good pumping keep you flowing.

PARK FLOW AND SHARING THE RAMP

Transition areas get busy, and the ramp is shared space.

Take turns

On a mini ramp or bowl, usually one person rides at a time. When they stop, the next person goes. Watch the order for a bit before you jump in.

Call your turn

A quick "I'm next" or a nod to whoever's waiting helps everyone know the order.

Don't snake

Snaking is dropping in when it's someone else's turn. Don't do it, even by accident. If you did, say sorry and let them go.

Don't sit in the landing

Sitting or standing in the flat bottom or on the deck right where people drop in is dangerous. Hang out off to the side.

Short runs are fine

When it's busy, keep your runs short so everyone gets a turn.

Help newer skaters

If someone's learning to drop in, give them some space and a word of encouragement. Everyone started there.

A PROGRESSION PLAN

Take it one step at a time.

01 **Comfortable carving and kickturning** on a small quarterpipe or mini ramp.

02 **Pumping** back and forth on a mini ramp without pushing.

03 **Knee slides** on purpose, so you trust your pads.

04 **Dropping in** on a small ramp.

05 **Rock to fakie.**

06 **Backside axle stall.**

07 **Frontside axle stall.**

08 **Rock and roll.**

09 **50-50 grinds** on coping.

10 **Carving a bowl** without stopping.

10 TRANSITION: THE NEXT STEPS

CHEAT SHEET

- [ ] **Pumping:** push down on the way down, relax on the way up.
- [ ] **Dropping in:** lean forward and commit. Leaning back is the classic slam.
- [ ] **Rock to fakie:** middle of the board on the coping, come back down leaning into the ramp.
- [ ] **Axle stalls:** both trucks on the coping, weight over the board.
- [ ] **Frontside:** chest faces the obstacle. **Backside:** back faces it.
- [ ] **Bowls:** carve smoothly, look where you want to go, follow the lines.
- [ ] **Etiquette:** take turns, don't snake, don't sit in the landing.
- [ ] **Safety:** helmet, pads, knee slides.

KEEP THE FLOW GOING

Got a new trick on the ramp? Your friends who live far away can still see it, and they can still try to match you on flat in a game of SKATE.

Join the testers at **skatelabs.app/testers**. Global SKATE is a free Game of SKATE played by video, in testing on iPhone and Android, for skaters 18+.