

## Get away – Ride your mountain bike

Psychologists have issued warnings in recent years about the downside of never being “unplugged”. In difficult economic times, the issue is more acute. It’s not healthy to be able to constantly check the laptop or iPhone to find out the latest change in the stock market.

There is one way to get a much-needed break from always being in touch – go ride your mountain bike. Mother Nature knows what is best for us. Many of the places I like to go simply do not have cell phone/internet access.



An added bonus for me is that my mountain biking skills are always a little suspect. I’ve been known to violate the adage, “Don’t look where you don’t want to go.” That can lead to violating another wise saying, “Keep rubber side down”. If I let my mind wander to the worries of the world instead of paying attention to the ruts ahead, my immediate “world” is apt to bring me back to “earth” on a moment’s notice.

I was in the Deschute Mountains outside of Bend, Ore., one day and momentarily let my mind contemplate world issues. I took the wrong line on a descent. My body and bicycle were soon separated. I’ve repeated the “ejection maneuver” in other places like Mammoth, Calif., the

Pequop Mountains in Nevada and Crystal Mountain, Wash.

Road riding has its benefits but one isn’t allowed to let the brain drain since one is surrounded by flashing neon signs, vehicles belching pollutants etc. Choosing to be surrounded by pine trees, animals, streams and sounds of the forest is therapeutic.

One of my favorite venues is Idaho City, Idaho. My No. 1 mental image is the start of the Excellent Adventure Mountain Bike Race that has been in existence for more than two decades. To a newcomer, the sight would be unusual. To veteran mountain bikers, seeing expensive bikes strewn across Main Street is expected – one day a year.



With a Le Mans-style start, everyone is equal when riders run to their bikes. Pros soon show why they're earned their standing as they navigate the 17.2-mile loop. It is difficult not to be impacted by the history/atmosphere in a small, mountain town and the memories shared by veteran bikers. The mountain keeps calling them back.

Mountain bikers enjoy passing on stories of times past. In the case of Idaho City, riders recall the 1998 race as if it were yesterday. Mother Nature unleashed her full fury of rain, hail, fog, wind etc. It became a race to survive. Two things haven't changed – the determination displayed by the mountain bikers to finish and Mother Nature's effort to thwart the human species.