

Craig's Austin Hills Chart

Version 2003-09-02

Send additions to <craigrowland at mac dot com>

The below are ratings for common hills in Austin for road cyclists. All ratings are subjective and based on comparable climbs in the area.

Gradient percentages obtained by using a Sky Mounti inclinometer mounted on the handlebars. A Sky Mounti of your own can be purchased from:

<http://www.skymounti.com>

Yes they're dorky, but how cool do you really think you look in spandex anyway?

Difficulty ratings based on average grade over the length of the climb and are all relative to other **Austin** climbs. Climbs in Austin are rarely over one mile long and are hard to approximate to long mountain stages in European races or mountain regions in the US.

Ratings for Tour de France climbs are based on **gradient, length, altitude gained, position in race, and road surface**. Some average gradients:

French Alps: 7-8%

French Pyrenees: 8-9%

Many of the Tour climbs are several kilometers long and cannot be compared to the Austin hills directly unless you do many hill repeats!

More information available at:

http://www.torelli.com/kom/tdf/rating_climbs.htm

For those interested in how grade is calculated:

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/question380.htm>

I'm still adding hills as I find time to ride them. If you have a hill grade that I don't have send it to: <craigrowland at mac dot com>

Include a descriptive name of the hill, directions, percent grade, length, and a difficulty rating on a 1-10 scale. All ratings are subject to change at my discretion based upon my own scientifically-proven burning lung test.

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Hill Name	% Grade	Difficulty	Length	Notes
Westlake Dr. to Top of 360	3-4%	1		From Westlake drive intersection to top of hill. Lots of traffic.
360 Bridge Base up to Westlake Dr.	5-6%	2		From bottom of 360 bridge to Westlake hills drive. Lots of traffic but good shoulder.
Bee Caves Hills (2244)	5-6%	2		Going from 2244 exit on 360 to 71 intersection. Various Hills. Lots of traffic but good shoulder.
Oasis Bluff Dr.	7-10%	2	0.50	Off of Bullick Hollow going up to Comanche Trail.
360 Hill going up to 2244 Exit	6-7%	3		Base of Wild Basin to top of hill at 2244. Lots of traffic exiting onto 2244. Steepest part of 360 and good for hill repeats.
McNeil Drive (Backside near Old Spicewood)	10%	5	0.2	At the end of McNeil towards Old Spicewood Rd.
Comanche Trail (First leg)	3-15% (Short)	5	0.40	Lots of blind turns and drunk beachgoers on road. Be careful. 15% climb for short bursts only.
Comanche Trail (Second leg)	3-15% (Short)	5	0.60	Lots of blind turns and drunk beachgoers on road. Be careful. 15% climb is only about 0.1 Mile
Toro Canyon Dr.	7-12%	5		Coming from Westlake Drive off of 360. Low traffic.
Westlake Dr.	7-10%	5		CAUTION: Lots of traffic and blind turns. Not very safe.
2222 Hill to 620	10%	6	0.55	Lots of traffic and a boring climb. Stick to Far West/Jester for hill repeats and much safer climbing.
Red Bud Trail	10-17% / 12-15% Avg.	6		Coming from Westlake Drive at stop sign. Very steep start and long grinder to top.
Far West Blvd. (Backside)	13% / 10% Avg.	6	0.5	Backside of Far West away from MOPAC. Fairly low traffic. Hill starts off at 13-% grade and levels out to about 10%
Bluegrass Dr.	10-15%	7		Opposite Spicewood Springs Rd. off 360. Light traffic.
Lost Creek Blvd.	10-15%	7		Entering from 360. Three major hills after entering the valley. The second hill is the steepest.
Courtyard Drive	10-19%	7	0.5	Enter off of 360. 15% first leg, 10% second leg, 19% last leg.
Bullick Hollow from Oasis Bluff to 620	15%	8	0.35	Very steep climb. Be careful of Mario Andretti wannabes screaming down the road in their cars.
Jester Blvd.	15%	8	0.5	A consistent 15% climb from 2222 up to the top.
Beauford Dr.	15-19%	9		Very steep but short. Probably steepest in Austin. The 10% sections feel like a rest. Grated pavement make it harder.

Qualifications for listing

Some people have been very helpful and sent in lists of hills they wanted me to climb and measure. I've gotten to most of them (except Mt. Bonnell which I've ridden before and don't think it gets any worse than 15% for any stretch) and will hit the rest as time permits.

Also, a rumor was circulating that a certain well known rider in Austin claimed publicly that Comanche Trail was the steepest in town. I have to respectfully disagree after measuring it, but I'm always hoping that someone sends me a new hill to ride that I've overlooked to beat out Beauford.

Mini Guide on Judging Hill Gradient

After owning an inclinometer on my bike for a while I've begun to get good at assessing a hill grade just by pure exertion and general feel. There are a couple clues though that can help you judge a hill if you don't have an inclinometer or don't have the feel for it yet:

- 1) Listen for cars passing you that are down shifting suddenly. This usually can peg the hill at least in the 7% range.
- 2) Look at the pavement on the hill. If you see spilled paint or (even better) spilled cement on the ground that usually means the hill is at least 10% because the construction trucks are leaving residue on the ground from the gradient when they climb.
- 3) Grading on the pavement. This is usually reserved for hills that are 15+% easily. If you see grading on the pavement combined with spilled concrete on the ground that means you are definitely in the high-teens percent grade. I suggest you downshift quickly. ☺