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Welcoming Beginners to Skateboarding ft. Next Up Foundation

by Daniel Fedkenheuer



Ryan Decenzo airing out a proper example of a frontside flip.

If you consider yourself to be somewhat of a regular in whatever scene you represent, odds are you've probably been on your board for a significant amount of time. Some of us may be reading this article with five to ten years of experience while anyone much older than that has likely been on a skateboard for more than half of their life already. At any of these lengths, our wholehearted commitment and dedication to the skateboarding lifestyle probably comes as second nature to us as does running to the skate shop where everyone knows your name whenever you need your next deck.

At this point, it becomes easy for many to forget about the times when they were feeble-minded kids who thought the concept of standing on a moving skateboard seemed insurmountable, let alone feeling comfortable on it. It becomes easy for experienced skaters to become so headstrong on conquering their next trick that they ignore the others in their scene who may only be learning their first trick. This is why we need a reminder for both beginners and experienced skateboarders alike to respect and welcome newcomers in skateboarding.



Next Up Founder, Vina Tinoco, chopping it up with The Birdman himself.

To back us up, we got the founder of the Next Up Foundation, Vinicius Tinoco, on the phone to talk about the importance of welcoming newcomers into our beloved culture. Though he's been skating since the days of an impoverished upbringing in Brazil, he currently finds himself surrounded by newcomers, working to enrich their lives through the potential of a future in skateboarding. Moreover, he finds himself consistently supported by the most talented professional skaters, skate-related manufacturers and general industry figures, all eager to help foster a sense of inclusivity to skateboarding's next generation. We could try to explain all the amazing things Next Up has accomplished over the past nine years, but checking out their recent events [here](#) would paint a far better picture.

Advice to Beginners



P-Rod getting familiar with the Next Up locals mid-sesh.

Tinoco's advice to beginner skateboarders is simple. "Don't feel scared. Just be open. Know that you are walking into a whole different world. You might face resistance from some people but you will be very welcomed in this community so jump right in." As you will find out, skateboarding, by nature, is composed of a community of primarily like-minded individuals, looking to reap the physical and mental benefits that skateboarding provides.

Aside from the valuable cardio exercise that skateboarding provides, the psychological capabilities that skateboarding provides access to can introduce a world of possibilities to those who may be new to the board. By encompassing life lessons on topics ranging from balance to goal setting to tolerance, skateboarding is a way to discover these topics in a manner that doesn't actually feel like learning. To get the full experience of the skateboarding lifestyle, however, Tinoco obliges that they key for newcomers is surrounding themselves with the right people.

Advice to Experienced Skaters



Nobody better to get industry insights from than Vans VP, Steve Van Doren.

As for the advanced skaters that may be reading this, Tinoco advised us that he "totally encourage[s] people, especially skateboarders who are somewhat good and have experience, to pay attention to what's going on around because ultimately, we're in a place where we all want to have fun and it's cool to share that place with others." Being that skateboarders in general have grown from being regarded as outlaws to being regarded as athletes, we have more of a chance than ever to make the most out of our reputation and continue down a path for growth by scaling the community of active participants.

In regards to beginners, Tinoco suggests, "We need to be role models but it's not an easy task to be a role model and to live by what you say... It takes time to be time to become that person and it takes dedication as well." Again, considering how the experienced skateboarders of today have more resources and capabilities than ever before to help enable others, this time and dedication that Tinoco suggests is an undoubtedly worthwhile investment both for our culture and for personal satisfaction. "Sometimes just by giving a helping hand to a kid you could make a huge difference in that kid's life and you could change that kid's life forever, just by being a positive influence" Tinoco added.

Advice for All



Ryan Decenzo taking a break from shredding to spread the stoke.

To sum this up, we must make clear that we didn't write this article to sell boards. We didn't write this article to sell trucks or wheels or bearings or anything, really. We wrote this article to encourage skaters on both end of the spectrum and all levels in between to think twice before ignoring those who skate at a less advanced skill level than you might. Be friendly, or at the very least respectful, to beginners when they enter your local skatepark. Suggest that they approach a ramp or a ledge from a different angle. Give them a tip for their foot placement if you see them trying a trick you have on lock. Offer them a hand if you see them slam. Tell them they have it next try. These efforts may seem inconsequential, but they may also be the pieces of encouragement that build the next successful contributor to skateboarding culture.