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## 2010 FOX 32 TALAS 150 FIT RLC FORK

★★★★☆

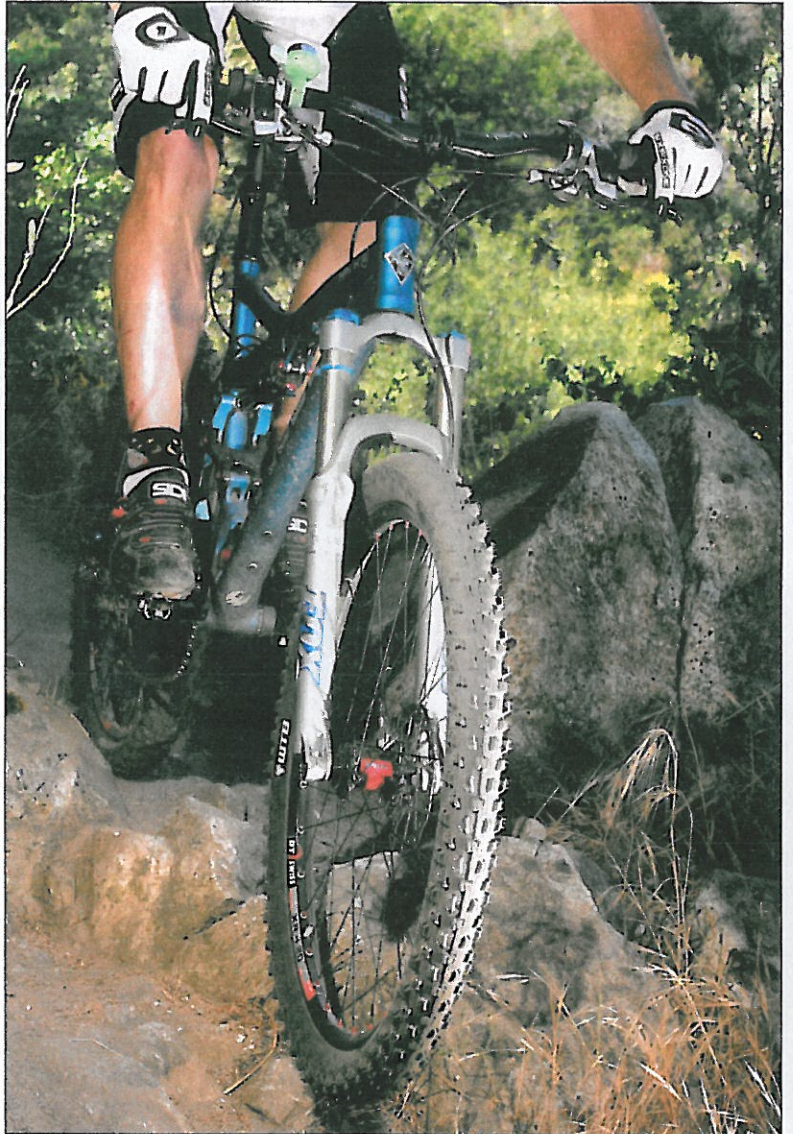
Making a great fork better is tough work

Fox Racing Shox's 32 TALAS fork is one of the most popular trailbike forks on the mountain. While there are no show-stopping exterior changes to the 2010 version, the internal changes are extensive, and so is the fork's performance.

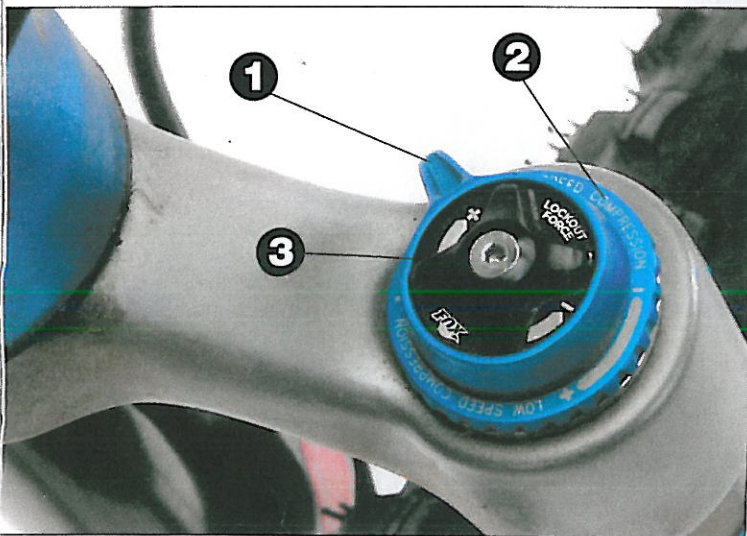
**Tech features:** Before we dive into the new features, let's go over what the numbers and letters in the fork's name are all about. The number 32 represents the diameter in millimeters of the fork's upper tubes (also known as stanchions). TALAS is Fox's acronym for Travel Adjustable Linier Air Spring. TALAS is the feature that allows you to set this fork's travel (on the fly) to 5.9, 5.1 or 4.3 inches of travel. The 150 represents the longest travel setting of the fork in millimeters. FIT stands for Fox Isolated Technology that we will go into more detail about in a moment. The RLC is the fork's damper (how the fork controls its compression and rebound) and shows that the fork has externally adjustable Rebound, Lockout and Compression tuning. Got all that? Good. Let's dig into the biggest internal change: FIT.

FIT is not one component that was slipped into the fork. It is many internal parts working together, including the low-speed compression circuit, the lockout, the lockout force adjustment, a new damper tube, and maybe the coolest component of FIT, an internal, expandable rubber bladder. What are all these FIT components supposed to be doing?

The FIT RLC damper design reduces oil volume and lightens the fork by 2.5 ounces.



**Noticeable improvement:** The 2010 Fox 32 TALAS 150 FIT RLC fork doesn't have to be ridden back-to-back with the '09 version to feel the difference. While it offers all the rigidity of the old fork, it shaves a little weight and handles the trail chatter way better.



**The right leg:** The top of the right leg houses external adjustment for the lockout (1), the low-speed compression (2) and the lockout force (3). Don't worry. The rider is not required to spin dials all the time. You can set it and forget it if that is your style.

That bladder's main advantage is keeping the oil and air separated inside the fork so you don't run into fluid aeration, which is known to deteriorate damping performance. The new damper design also minimizes unsprung weight. A new, wider, low-speed compression range allows riders to choose a plush or platform-firm ride and is easily manipulated for on-the-fly tuning. Mid- and high-speed compression damping are tuned using a shim stack (thin washers that bend as oil pressure is applied). Shim stacks can be tuned, but this would require disassembly and a trained suspension technician.

Fox's patented lockout threshold force adjuster lets the rider dial-in the severity of the fork's lockout feature. You can adjust the lockout to close to rock solid or dial in a softer ProPedal feel.

A returning option from 2009 is the Fox/Shimano-developed 15QR system. The 15QR replaces the road-bike-holdover, nine-millimeter axle/open-dropout system used for the last decade on virtually every trailbike. The

15QR replaces the nine-millimeter axle with a 15-millimeter hollow axle. Like the QR implies, it is a quick-release system that requires no tools. Fox feels their system improves transverse shear stiffness (the fork sliders function more as a single unit), torsional stiffness and axle stiffness.

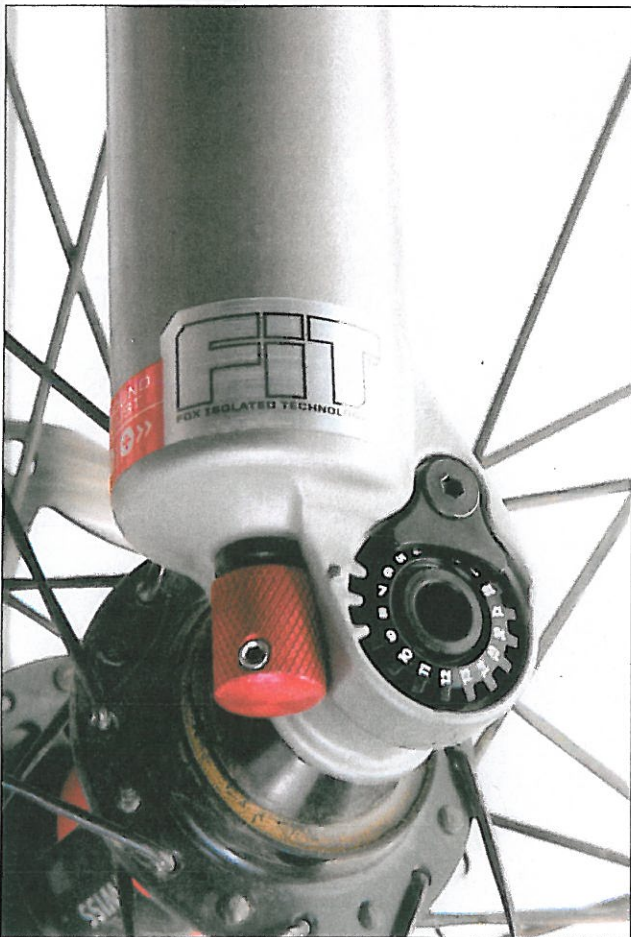
The 32 TALAS 150 FIT RLC fork is available with a standard 1-1/8 steerer tube or a 1.5-inch tapered steerer tube. Our fork came in at 3.8 pounds, slightly lighter than last year's non-TALAS version of the fork. The Fox 32 TALAS 150 FIT RLC fork sells for \$870. You can get more information by calling Fox Racing Shox at (800) 369-7469.

**After the thrashing:** In a word: remarkable. First, don't let all the adjustability intimidate you. Everything, from the rebound to the lockout threshold to the low-speed compression adjustment, is so intuitive that you won't have to monkey around for hours trying to find the perfect setting. Unlike many suspension systems where you have to be spot-on, or it just doesn't work, this fork allows you to reap ride benefits just by getting close. We chalked up our first ride on the fork to beginner's luck because everything felt so spot-on. It had to have been a lucky break. Not so. Subsequent riders found that they, too, could find their ideal settings quickly—and without a lot of experimentation.

So what does this ride feel like? There is a new level of control and plushness, especially at normal trail-riding



**The left leg:** The lever on the top of the left fork leg sets the travel to one of three pre-determined lengths. The center knob covers the schrader valve for adding or reducing air spring pressure. Tip: Set the TALAS to the shortest travel to make the knob removal easier.



**Bottom right:** The fork's external rebound adjuster gets moved to the bottom of the fork leg. The numbered cam on the fork leg allows riders to dial in exactly where they want the 15QR lever (left side) to be positioned once snug.

speed. The front tire seems to float over small trail obstacles and irregularities. The low-speed compression and lockout adjustments give the rider the opportunity to dial in the exact firmness or suppleness he desires. Hit something substantial and the fork moves into its travel with a progressiveness that would have you believe Fox snuck a coil spring in there.

Where a fork's performance is sometimes the weakest link in a trailbike's front end, this fork's performance is so solid in rocky and nasty terrain that we can see how it could actually overpower certain frames' rigidity. On our Pivot Mach 5, the bike's frame rigidity and the fork seemed to have been engineered together, a match made in mountain bike heaven. Throw this fork on a lesser frame (or an older frame that has seen abuse and fatigue) and you wouldn't get the fork's full benefit, because the frame couldn't back it up. The fork is that good.

Holding the 32 TALAS 150 FIT RLC fork back from a five-star rating is the fact that we have not ridden the 32 Float fork (the fixed-travel, air-sprung version in the 32 line of forks). While we did find ourselves using the TALAS feature during our rides, it is a feature we would be tempted to give up if it meant a weight reduction or improved overall fork performance. We can't be sure of either until we can slap one on a bike. Stay tuned.