

Safe Cycling Tips

Be Visible

- ◆ Wear bright or retro-reflective clothing.
- ◆ If bicycling at night, lights are required; reflective clothing will increase your visibility.

Be Aware

- ◆ Make eye contact with motorists. Never assume they can see you.
- ◆ Be especially alert at intersections. Motorists often find it difficult to see bicyclists.
- ◆ Use caution when riding near buses. Never pass on the right.
- ◆ Watch out for pedestrians. Use a bell or your voice to alert them as you approach.

Be Smart

- ◆ Wear a properly-fitted helmet approved by Snell, ASTM or ANSI.
- ◆ Check and maintain your bicycle.
- ◆ Deter theft by registering your bicycle; lock it when you leave it.

Be Predictable

- ◆ Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- ◆ Bicycle with traffic not against it.
- ◆ Look behind you and use proper hand signals before making turns.

Get Fit Through Cycling



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For more information about bicycle safety
education materials, contact your local
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Bicycling is a sport that can help you improve your fitness while you enjoy the freedom of the open road or trail. Bicycling has long been recognized as one of the best forms of aerobic exercise, and it's fun!! Almost anyone of any age can take up bicycling for fitness. One should start slowly and work up to increasingly demanding levels as fitness develops.

The following tips will help you get started on a bicycling-for-fitness program:

◆ If you've been a couch potato for a long time (especially if you're over 35), most experts recommend **checking with your doctor** before beginning a fitness program.



◆ **Regular exercise** is the key, but allow some time for your body to rest, too. Start by riding every other day, gradually increasing to five or six days a week. Try to ride two to five miles per day, gradually increasing your mileage as your conditioning allows.

◆ **Stretching** before you start can help avoid muscle pulls. Start out fairly slowly each time you ride, and build up speed as you go. This warms up your muscles and helps reduce soreness. Near the end of your ride, ease off and cycle more gently for five or ten minutes to cool down. When you get off the bike, walk around and stretch a bit to help relax your muscles.

◆ To properly fuel the real cycling machine - YOU - **eat a balanced diet**, with emphasis on complex carbohydrates: fruit, bread, cereals, rice, potatoes and pasta. Don't forget fresh vegetables, lean meat, fish, beans and low-fat dairy products. Keep fats, sugar, and salt to a minimum.



◆ Work to develop a **good pedal stroke**. The number of times you turn the pedal per minute (your cadence) should be between 70 and 90. Shift your gears so you can maintain this cadence.

◆ With the development of multi-speed bikes, cyclists can make short work of hills. However, avoid pedaling in a gear that is "too hard." It's better for your knees, lungs, circulation, and muscle development to **use low gears**. Select the lowest gear that your feet can spin smoothly while maintaining pressure on your pedals. Most newer bikes come with a triple crank which provides the cyclist with a set of exceptionally low gears. Take advantage of it!!



◆ The **bicycle seat** is adjustable and should be positioned so that your leg is nearly straight when at the bottom of the pedal revolution. Having the seat positioned too low is inefficient and strains your muscles.

◆ **Toe clips and straps** increase your pedaling efficiency and prevent your feet from slipping when accelerating. When riding in the stop and go traffic, keep the straps loose. Don't use them if you have trouble getting your feet in and out of them.

◆ The most important piece of gear for a cyclist is a **helmet**. Nobody expects to crash with a bicycle, but in time you will. When you do, you must have head protection. Approximately 85% of all serious bicycle injuries are head injuries. Road rash and broken bones heal; scrambled brains may not. Wearing a bike helmet is common sense. Don't forget **eye protection**. Sunglasses do more than block damaging sun rays. They can also protect your eyes from bugs or gravel that may fly from passing cars or cyclists.

◆ Variable weather poses a challenge to the cyclist. **Dress with layers** so you can peel off or put on what is needed. Don't overdress. You'll work up a lot of heat riding. It's important not to sweat in heavy clothes and then get chilled later. Wool and polypropylene are best in cold weather. Wind breakers tend to hold in moisture that will cause a chill. Wear clothing that will breathe.

◆ **Drink lots of water** before, during and after your workout. On a hot day you can sweat more than two quarts per hour. Headaches, fatigue and light-headedness are signs that you are dehydrated and need to drink more water. Replacing the fluids in your body helps it perform, as well as recover.



◆ **Keep your body loose and relaxed**. Let your arms and knees absorb the bumps rather than your head and neck. If you find yourself heading for a fallen branch or pothole that you can't avoid, stay loose, rise slightly out of the saddle, and hold the handlebars firmly. Fast pedaling in low gears helps maintain balance.

◆ Lastly, remember that cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists. **Follow the traffic laws** and be considerate of others. Practice sharing the road and help make it an enjoyable place to cycle. Courtesy is contagious. Besides being fun and practical, bicycling is an exercise you can continue for a lifetime.