



# ADVANCED CYCLING TIPS

## CLIMBING AND DESCENDING

### Climbing Technique

- Maintain a high cadence to avoid stress on your knees
- Start in a lower gear; upshifts are easier than downshifts
- Keep upper body relaxed; elbows in, back straight, loose grip on the bars

### Climbing Attitude

- Confidence will help you ride the entire hill without stopping
- Be mentally tough and push yourself; the mind tires before the body
- Concentrate on form and breathing; the hill will soon disappear behind you

### Climbing Efficiency

- Eat before you are hungry, drink before you are thirsty; every 20 minutes
- Rests should only last a minute or two; don't let the body think it's over
- Practice breathing and climbing techniques to be more efficient on the bike

### Gearing for Climbs

- A comfortable gear will be a factor of your fitness level
- Choose a gear that will allow you to spin comfortably; avoid excessive knee stress
- Use a lower gear to avoid exhaustion during the climb

### Endless climbs

- Combine sitting and standing to stretch and work different muscle groups
- Concentrate on your breathing; try to keep it at a constant level throughout the climb
- Remember to eat and drink every 20 minutes to maintain energy output

### Speed control

- If you do not know the road or traffic volume, ride with extra caution
- Hazards are harder to avoid at high speed, especially while turning
- Do not overtake motorists unless the road allows it

### Ride predictably

- Remain in the same portion of the roadway down a curvy descent
- Take the lane if you are traveling the same speed as motorists
- Take the lane if the road is narrow and curvy regardless of speed

### Brakes

- Make sure that your brake pads have at least 1/8" of wear left on them
- Brake pads should hit only the rim; pads rubbing the tire can cause a blowout
- There should be 1" or more between the lever and bars with brakes depressed

### Braking technique

- Long descents require uniform pressure on front and rear brakes
- Constant braking can overheat the rims resulting in loss of braking response
- Brake before a curve

### Safety

- Riding upright will increase wind resistance and help slow you down
- Always keep both hands on the bars; slow down if the bike shakes at high speed
- Slow down for wet rides; ask ride leaders about general road conditions

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# ADVANCED CYCLING TIPS

## GROUP RIDING

### Be predictable

- In a group, your actions affect those around you, not just yourself
- Riders expect you to continue straight and at a constant speed
- Signal your intention to turn or slow down before you do so

### Use signals

- Use hand signals to indicate turns and point out hazards to others
- Left or right arm straight out to indicate left or right turn
- Left arm out and down with palm to the rear to indicate stopping

### Give warnings

- Riders should call out right turns, left turns and stops in addition to signaling
- Announce turns before the intersections to give riders a chance to position themselves
- Try to avoid sudden stops or turns except for emergencies

### Change positions correctly

- Slower moving traffic stays to the right; faster traffic to the left
- Pass slower moving vehicles on the left; announce your intention to do so
- Announce passes on the right clearly as this is not a usual maneuver

### Announce hazards

- Most cyclists do not have a full view of the road while riding in a group
- Announce potholes and other hazards so others can avoid them
- Call out the hazard and point down to it, either left or right

### Watch for traffic from the rear

- The last rider should frequently check for overtaking cars
- Announce "car back" clearly and loudly
- It is also helpful to announce "car up" on narrow roads or when riding two abreast

### Watch out at intersections

- Leader should announce slowing or stopping at intersections if necessary
- Cyclists should not follow others through intersections without scanning
- Each cyclist is responsible for checking cross traffic; if you must stop, signal

### Leave room for cars

- On narrow road or during climbs, leave space between every three or four riders
- Motorists will utilize the shorter passing intervals to pass the group
- Good relations with motorists is the responsibility of every cyclist

### Stop off road

- When stopping for mechanicals or regrouping, always move clear off the road
- Only if conditions permit should you move back onto the road as a group
- Always yield to traffic in the roadway

### Ride single file

- It is illegal in some areas to ride more than two abreast
- Ride single file between intersections; double up when the group stops and communicate your next step
- When taking the lane, double up and take the whole lane

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## ADVANCED CYCLING TIPS

# LIGHTS AT NIGHT

### Visibility

- By law, you must have a front white light and red rear reflector in most states
- Motorists are familiar with white meaning front and red meaning rear
- Front lights can illuminate your path or simply make you visible at night

### Wattage

- Inexpensive lights seldom light your path; at about 3 watts, they make you visible
- Lighting systems are available that put out 45 watts with a halogen bulb
- Most full-time commuters use at least a 10 watt system with a rechargeable battery

### Power sources

- From AA batteries to nickel-metal-hydride rechargeables, the options are endless
- Self-contained, rechargeable batteries have the best life and brightest light
- Simple AA powered lights have lower initial cost but frequent battery replacement

### Helmet vs. bar mount

- Helmet mounted lights allow you to get the attention of motorists by looking at them
- Bar mounted lights make you look more like a vehicle but only point forward
- The ideal situation is one helmet light and one bar-mounted light for safety

### Rear lights

- A red rear blinking light is much more conspicuous than a passive reflector
- Make sure that your light is visible to motorists and not pointing up or down
- Clear obstructions from the back of the bike that would block the light

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## ADVANCED CYCLING TIPS

# ON-BIKE STRETCHING AND EXERCISES

### Reasons to stretch

- Reduce tightness and strain in your neck, back, shoulders, arms and face
- Ride longer with less fatigue; recover faster with post-ride stretches
- Always warm-up muscles before stretching; cold stretching can cause injury

### Be careful

- Never attempt these stretches while riding in a group or paceline situation
- Check for traffic, slow down and maintain control of your bicycle
- Attempt only on smooth, flat, dry pavement

### Lower and middle back

- With one hand on the bar, reach back and place your forearm across your lower back
- Twist your upper body toward the hand that is behind you; hold for 5 seconds
- Look over your shoulder and move that shoulder back while moving the other forward

### Shoulder and neck

- Reach across chest to opposite shoulder as far as comfortable; hold for 5 seconds
- Lift shoulders towards your ears until you feel tension
- Hold for 5 seconds, then slowly roll back to original position

### Fingers and forearms

- Place hand on hip, palm down, fingers up; straighten elbow to stretch for 10 seconds
- Place fingers on handlebar and push down to stretch forearms; hold for 5 seconds
- Bend hand back as far as possible; rotate wrist back and forth; hold for 5 seconds

### Face and jaw

- Open your mouth in an "O" then move your lips right to left to stretch cheek muscles
- Open your mouth wide to stretch jaw muscles
- Never clench your teeth while riding

### Back

- Arch your back while lowering your head slightly
- Then straighten your back and lift your head up to straighten your spine
- Hold each for 5 seconds; perform both stretches consecutively

### Legs

- While coasting, straighten one leg in the 6 o'clock position and drop your heel
- In the 3 and 9 o'clock position, stand and drop both heels; switch feet and repeat
- Hold each stretch for 10 seconds and repeat

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## ADVANCED CYCLING TIPS

# PACELINES AND DRAFTING

### Drafting

- Following closely behind another rider cuts down on wind resistance
- Only draft off of someone whose riding style or experience you trust
- Always inform the rider in front that you are on their wheel; between 6" and 18" back

### Paceline

- A group of riders drafting off of each other is a paceline; the leader dictates pace
- Front rider must communicate obstacles to riders behind; last rider watches traffic
- Pay close attention to those ahead and behind; be able to react safely and quickly

### Rotation

- Riders in a paceline take turns 'pulling' the group along through the wind
- To move from the front, check traffic, pull out to the left and move to the back
- The second rider is now the leader and provides draft for allotted time or distance

### Signals

- Lead rider must signal debris and hazards in roadway as well as stops and turns
- Point in direction of hazard and announce 'grate' or 'gravel' for other riders
- Rear rider is responsible for signaling intentions to following traffic

### Dangers

- Do not draft on high traffic roads or roads with frequent intersections
- There is very little room for error when riding very close to others
- Crashing in a paceline has a domino effect, which may knock down riders behind you

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