



# BEGINNING CYCLING ABC QUICK CHECK

## **A is for air**

- Inflate tires to rated pressure as listed on the sidewall of the tire
- Use a pressure gauge to insure proper pressure
- Check for damage to tire tread and sidewall; replace if damaged

## **B is for brakes**

- Inspect pads for wear; replace if there is less than 1/8" of pad left
- Check pad adjustment; make sure they do not rub tire or dive into spokes
- Check brake level travel; at least 1" between bar and lever when applied

## **C is for cranks, chain and cassette**

- Make sure that your crank bolts are tight; lube the threads only, nothing else
- Check your chain for wear; 12 links should measure no more than 12 1/8 inches
- If your chain skips on your cassette, you might need a new one or just an adjustment

## **Quick is for quick releases**

- Hubs need to be tight in the frame; your quick release should engage at 90°
- Your hub quick release should point back to insure that nothing catches on it
- Inspect brake and seat quick releases to insure that they are closed tightly

## **Check is for check it over**

- Take a quick ride to check if derailleurs and brakes are working properly
- Inspect the bike for loose or broken parts; tighten, replace or fix them
- Pay extra attention to your bike during the first few miles of the ride

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cycling tips, visit  
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# BEGINNING CYCLING BICYCLE CLOTHING BASICS

## Always wear a properly fitting helmet

- Make sure that the helmet fits on top of the head, not tipped back
- Always wear a helmet while riding a bike, no matter how short the trip
- After a crash or impact on your helmet, replace it immediately

## Shorts

- Bike shorts include a pad to increase comfort while in the saddle
- Tight, close fit keeps fabrics from rubbing your skin and causing irritation
- Bike shorts should be worn alone or under another pair of lightweight shorts

## Jerseys

- Technical fabric of jerseys pulls moisture off of your skin to keep you dry
- Jerseys do not absorb moisture; they do not get heavy with perspiration
- On cold days, cotton will absorb water and hold it next to your skin, chilling you

## Shoes

- Stiff soles of cycling shoes allow better power transmission to pedals
- Mesh vents allow air to circulate around feet keeping them dry
- Shoes are usually designed to accept cleats for clipless pedals

## Glasses

- Protect your eyes from wind, dirt, debris and the sun while riding
- Your front wheel or someone else's rear wheel can shoot glass or dirt at your face
- Keep perspiration out of your glasses with a thin headband around your forehead

## Gloves

- Provide padding to help increase comfort and relieve numbness while riding
- Protect your hands in the event of a fall with cycling specific gloves
- Experienced cyclists can clean glass and debris off of tires with gloves while riding

## Tights

- Keep your legs warm and out of the wind with full-length tights when it's cold
- Muscles function better when they are warm and protected from the elements
- Full-length leg warmers which can be removed during a ride are also a good idea

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# BEGINNING CYCLING EFFICIENCY ON THE BIKE

## Use lower gears

- Most beginning cyclists push too big a gear; down shift and spin a smaller gear
- Low cadence will cause you to fatigue faster and might cause knee pain
- Try to spin about 90 rpms; you'll have more energy and get a better workout

## Starting

- When stopped, don't push off the ground to get started
- Leave one pedal in the two o'clock position; push down when you are ready to go
- You will have enough momentum to balance and put your other foot on the pedal

## Relax

- You should be comfortable while you ride
- Relax while you ride; it takes energy to grip the handlebar in fear
- Change hand positions often, slightly bend your elbows, stretch your neck while riding

## Don't rock the boat

- Make sure that your saddle height is adjusted properly
- Too high and your hips rock; too low causes knee pain
- You should have a slight bend in your knee at the bottom of the pedal stroke

## Skip the soft shoes

- Soft-soled shoes absorb pedaling energy and slow you down
- Stiff-soled cycling shoes help you transfer more energy to forward motion
- Toe clips and clipless pedals attach your foot to the pedal which increases efficiency

## Red light, green light

- Restarting from a stop uses more energy than a slowing and not stopping
- Time it so that you hit the intersection on green so you don't have to stop
- Make sure that you are aware of how your actions affect other vehicles around you

## Avoid the wall

- Listen to your body while you ride to avoid hitting the wall of exhaustion
- Eat before you are hungry and drink before you are thirsty to avoid fatigue
- If you experience a lightheaded feeling, get off the bike and get some fluids

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# BEGINNING CYCLING HELMET FIT

## Wear a helmet

- A helmet is your last line of defense in a crash; never ride without one
- Helmets can reduce serious head injuries by 85% in a crash
- A helmet will not protect your head if it is not properly fit

## Helmet Fit

- Make sure that the helmet fits on top of the head, not tipped back
- Always wear a helmet while riding a bike, no matter how short the trip
- After a crash or any impact that affects your helmet, replace it immediately

## Shell and pads

- Find the smallest helmet shell size that fits over your head
- Helmet pads should not be used to make a helmet that is too big fit your head
- Leave about two-fingers width between your eyebrows and the front of the helmet

## Straps

- The straps should be joined just under each ear at the jawbone
- The buckle should be snug with your mouth completely open
- Periodically check your strap adjustment; improper fit can render helmet useless

## Ventilation

- In general, the more vents the better; improper ventilation can cause overheating
- Helmets with good ventilation can actually be cooler than riding with no helmet at all
- More vents usually mean a higher priced helmet; buy one that you are proud to wear

## Colors

- Helmets come in all different colors in different models; buy a highly visible color
- Shell color does not affect the temperature of the helmet against your head
- Pick a color that encourages you or your kids to wear it

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# BEGINNING CYCLING

## SHARING THE PATH

### Courtesy

- Respect other trail users; joggers, walkers, bladders, wheelchairs all have trail rights
- Respect slower cyclists; yield to slower users
- Obey speed limits; they are posted for your safety

### Announce when passing

- Use a bell, horn or voice to indicate your intention to pass
- Warn others well in advance so you don't startle them
- Clearly announce "On your left" when passing

### Yield when entering and crossing

- Yield to traffic at places where the trail crosses the road
- Yield to other users at trail intersections
- Slow down before intersections and when entering the trail from the road

### Keep right

- Stay as close to the right as possible, except when passing
- Give yourself enough room to maneuver around any hazards
- Ride single file to avoid possible collisions with other trail users

### Pass on left

- Scan ahead and behind before announcing your intention to pass another user
- Pull out only when you are sure the lane is clear
- Allow plenty of room, about two bike lengths, before moving back to the right

### Be predictable

- Travel in a straight line unless you are avoiding hazards or passing
- Indicate your intention to turn or pass
- Warn other users of your intentions

### Use lights at night

- Most trail users will not have lights at night; use a white front and red rear light
- Watch for walkers as you will overtake them the fastest
- Reflective clothing does not help in the absence of light

### Do not block the trail

- For group rides, use no more than half the trail; don't hog the trail
- During heavy use periods (holidays and weekends) stay single file
- Stop and regroup completely off of the trail

### Clean up litter

- Pack out more than you pack in
- Encourage others to respect the path
- Place all litter in its proper receptacle

### Limitations for transportation

- Most paths were not designed for high-speed, high volume traffic
- Use paths keeping in mind their recreational nature
- It might be faster to use roads and avoid the traffic on the paths during heavy use

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# BEGINNING CYCLING

# SHIFTING AND GEARS

## Front derailleur

- Left shifter controls the front derailleur and which chainring your chain is on
- Used less frequently than rear derailleur
- Shifting requires more attention than the rear derailleur but is done less frequently

## Rear derailleur

- Right shifter controls the rear derailleur; this is the fine tuning of the gear range
- Used most frequently to account for minor changes in terrain
- Two or three shifts down is equal to one shift down on the front derailleur

## Chainrings up front

- Bikes come with two or three chainrings; three is for mountain biking and touring
- These are low, medium and high range or low and high for road bikes with two
- Small ring is low gear for climbs, middle ring for flats, big ring for descents

## Cassette in the rear

- The smaller the cog on the cassette, the harder the gear is to push
- Most bikes have 7, 8, or 9 cogs; rear derailleur moves the chain from one to another
- Many front and rear gear combinations overlap

## Pedaling

- Pedal at about 90 rpms both climbing or descending; it's faster than you think
- Shift into an easier gear before you need it; before a climb instead of during one
- You should be using the same pedal force and cadence to climb as you do to descend

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