

# Cycling

A Resource for Riders



# Finding the Time to Bike

**P**hysical fitness tops the list of benefits that come with riding your bike, as research links improved cardiovascular health to biking.

Regular cycling also can help protect you from serious diseases such as obesity, cancer, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis.

Cycling is low impact on your joints and gives you a well-rounded muscle workout. It also is great for improving your strength, stamina and overall aerobic fitness. Finding the time or the motivation to jump on a bike can be a challenge, however, for many people.

## MAKE IT FUN

One of the best ways to enjoy cycling is to make it a leisurely activity. Odds are there are safe hilly areas or designated recreational spots in your area that can be perfect for an afternoon on your bike.

Even though cycling does require the purchase of a bike, it is an otherwise low-cost way to stay in great shape, as you need only yourself and a safe course to enjoy yourself.

## BIKE TO WORK WEEK

If you need some help being inspired to ride your bike to work, make it a group activity.

National Bike to Work Week is May 11-15, 2015, so spread the word amongst your



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co-workers, friends and family members.

The average North American bicycle commuter is a 39-year-old male professional with a household income in excess of \$45,000,

according to a survey published in the Journal of the Transportation Research Board.

But anyone can choose to make their trip to work more physically beneficial.

## TIPS & SAFETY

To make sure you arrive at your destination safely, follow these tips from the League of American Bicyclists:

- Always wear a helmet to protect your head in the event

of a crash;

- Obey all stop signs, traffic lights and lane markings;
- Look before you change lanes or signal a turn;
- Wear bright clothing; and
- Check the forecast.

# Choosing Kids' Bikes

For expert and novice cyclists alike, one of the most exciting parts of the sport can be passing along your passion to the next generation.

To be able to inspire a child to take his first bike ride, no matter his age, is an achievement that can match even winning a road race or successfully completing a challenging mountain course.

Involving children in your favorite pastime doesn't have to wait until they are physically able to handle pedaling on their own. Quite the contrary. You can introduce a child to a bike by taking them along on rides with you, through the use of a seat or trailer.

## SEATS & TRAILERS

A child bike seat can be affixed to your bike safely and securely, allowing for even the youngest of cycling enthusiasts to enjoy their first ride with you.

Likewise, a trailer bike is a great first step to allow a child who is a little older to feel independent on a ride.

Even though trailers give children the opportunity to experience the wind blowing through their hair, these options generally do not come with pedals or handlebars. But they do include cup holders and ample

room to enjoy all of the perks of a fun-filled adventure.

## TRAILER BIKE

A trailer bike is a miniature bicycle that allows your child to pedal, while he or she still relies on you for balance, control and steering.

The trailer bike is a single-wheel attachment that bolts into your seat post or on a rear rack. It's a great option for children starting around 4 years old, to give them a taste of the physical requirements of a bike ride.

## KID'S BIKE

When your child is ready for the full-fledged experience, you should start with a bike that includes training wheels. Many starter bikes also come with an additional pull rear brake that will help prepare them for the future use of hand brakes.

When the training wheels are ready to come off, make sure the bike is size-appropriate instead of using one that may take a couple of years to grow into. Your child should be able to comfortably get on the bike and stand with his or her feet on the ground.



# Avoid These Injuries

**C**ycling is one of the most enjoyable and healthy activities you can partake in. Due to inherent risks of sharing the streets with much larger vehicles, it can also be a potentially dangerous one.

While only 1 percent of all trips taken in the U.S. are by bicycle, bicyclists face a higher risk of crash-related injury and death than occupants of motor vehicles do. These numbers, reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, shed light on the need for more vigilance amongst both cyclists and motorists.

The CDC also states that in 2010 in the U.S., almost 800 bicyclists were killed and there were an estimated 515,000 emergency department visits due to bicycle-related injuries. These are staggering numbers that many experts say can be avoided with more education and clearer laws.

## MAJOR RISK FACTORS

Age, geographic location and even gender can be determining factors in your chance of being involved in a dangerous cycling collision.

The CDC reports the following as major risk factors:

- Children (5 to 14 years), adolescents and young adults (15 to 24 years) have the highest rates of nonfatal bicycle-related injuries, accounting for almost 60 percent of all bicycle-related

injuries seen in U.S. emergency departments;

- Males are much more likely to be killed or injured on bicycles than are females; and
- Most cyclist deaths occur in urban areas and at non-intersection locations.

## STAYING SAFE

One of the smartest things any cyclist can do before the rubber hits the road is wear a helmet, which have been shown to reduce the risk of head and brain injuries in the event of a crash, according to the CDC.

Other ways you can keep yourself, your friends and family members safe is to use active lighting, especially if you're riding in non-peak daylight hours. Active lighting can include front white lights, rear red lights or other strategic lighting — either on the machine or the rider.

Clothing also is a big factor in helping you stay safe on your ride. Fluorescent clothing can make bicyclists visible from long distances during the daytime, while retro-reflective clothing can do the same at night.

Check in with your local bicycle shop to discover their options for safety-effective riding gear.



# Join an Association

If you spend a large portion of your free time pedaling across your community, joining a biking association may be ideal for you.

There are biking organizations throughout nearly every major city, and even many smaller ones across the country.

Cyclists form a strong, united community of members who discuss interests and new technologies impacting the sport.

Before joining a local, state or even national association, make sure to research their required dues and time commitments. If either are out of your reach, you'll want to find one that better accommodates your situation.

## HAVE A VOICE

Cycling associations are great ways to come together with your fellow cyclists to make major differences in your community.

If your area is lacking in cycling lanes or ample space to explore via your own two wheels, you and your fellow association members may be able to influence major change by appealing to your city officials or tourism boards.

Many cycling associations partner with their state capitol, state transportation department and other high-level organizations to reach their goals of policy change.

Perhaps most importantly,



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cycling associations provide educational services for cyclists, motorists, law enforcement and the general public through a variety of efforts. Lending your services to these types of causes can help make the roads a safer place for everyone.

## FIND GREAT RESOURCES

Many associations have secured major funding to create databases of local cycling routes and facilities. These can be helpful when trying to plan your next cycling excursion.

Association leadership also may be privy to details of local ordinances and help keep you updated on any changes to cycling laws. For example, many neighborhoods do not allow cycling on sidewalks, multi-use paths and other places where motor

vehicles are not allowed. Being caught on your bike in these areas can lead to major fines.

If you're a new cyclist and not sure of all of the rules of the road, joining an association may help keep you street-legal.

# The Beach Cruiser

**T**he waves chop majestically against the shore to the rhythm of your legs pedaling down the pathway. The calls of seagulls echo in unison with the whipping of your bicycle spokes.

The combination of beach and bike can be downright exhilarating.

From Santa Monica to Miami, the country's beaches offer a picturesque backdrop for cyclists hoping to mix in a little scenery with their exercise. Either with your own bike or a rental, there is no better option than the beach cruiser for a relaxed outing.

Combining balloon-style tires and an upright seating posture, beach cruisers are popular for their signature laid-back look. They are common sights on beaches and in other relaxed environments because they are easy to ride and much slower than other styles of bike.

Most beach cruisers are of the single-speed variety, encouraging a lengthy ride to take in the sights while you work your muscles into shape.

## HISTORY

According to popular bike-maker Schwinn, the company developed the first iteration of the cruiser in the 1930s. The bike was extremely popular until about the 1960s, when the market called for smaller models.

The 1990s marked the official comeback of the cruiser, according to Schwinn, when it reissued its Black Phantom model to celebrate the company's 100th birthday. Other com-


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panies followed, and the cruiser was reborn.

## SAFETY & MAINTENANCE

If you've ridden a conventional bicycle, hopping on a

cruiser will be an easy task.

But there are certain practices you'll want to consider to make sure your bike goes the distance.

First of all, the word beach should conjure up images of white or brown sand stretch-

ing into a crystal clear ocean. While a relaxing, beautiful sight, that same sand can cause friction on your cruiser's gears if it builds up on the chain or gear sprockets. Make sure to keep large amounts of sand clear from these areas.

In most beach locations, there will be many walkers and runners taking in the sights. Be sure to obey all posted cycling laws to make sure the environment remains safe and enjoyable for everyone.

# What to Pack

**D**o you get a rush out of scaling rugged terrain and barreling down sharp dirt paths on your mountain bike? You're not alone.

Mountain biking is one of the fastest growing segments of cycling because of the adrenaline-packing, fist-clenching excitement that comes along with it.

If you're a grizzled veteran, you know that a day of mountain biking does not solely require you and your trusty bike.

A backpack loaded with materials for optimal safety and nourishment can be just as vital. So check out our guide, and don't forget to plan accordingly.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING ESSENTIALS

- Helmet and other safety gear, which can include reflective lighting and gloves for your hands.

Considering that many mountain biking adventures take place off the beaten path, you can never be too safe when it comes to protecting yourself and fellow bikers from injury.

If you have allergies and have been known to have seriously adverse reactions, make sure to pack your allergy medications and any necessary emergency rescue equipment.

- This segues into our next suggestion: The first-aid kit. Load it with small alcohol pads, bandages, tweezers and some kind of anti-infection spray.


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Mountain biking can bring with it the potential for a variety of injuries, so pack your kit according to the conditions and weather you will be biking through.

- Having on hand repair

equipment such as tire levers, spare tubes and a patch kit can be the difference between a successful mountain biking experience and a day cut short by equipment malfunction.

Also don't forget the tools

necessary to pull off a tire or make a gear repair. This includes a quality mini-tool and air pump.

- Identification and cash also are crucial to remember before you head out on your trip. Your

identification is likely necessary if you plan on renting any type of supplemental equipment or gear on site. Cash is never bad to have around in case of an unexpected trip to a local store.

# Bicycling by the Numbers

**D**id you know the western United States have the highest bicycling rates while southern states have extremely low levels?

How about the fact that almost all the growth in bicycling in the U.S. over the past two decades has been among men between 25 and 64 years old?

These interesting tidbits were uncovered by a 2011 study published in Transportation Research A, and they shine a light on the demographical makeup of the average American bicyclist.

## WHAT MAKES A CYCLIST?

According to a 2006 survey by the Outdoor Industry Foundation, cycling participants are:

- 58 percent male and 42 percent female
- 29 percent ages 16 to 24
- 21 percent ages 25 to 34
- 23 percent ages 35 to 44
- 27 percent ages 45
- 53 percent married
- 47 percent unmarried
- 32 percent household income <\$40,000
- 40 percent \$40,000-\$79,000
- 28 percent \$80,000

## DETERMINING FACTORS

Oftentimes, it is access to not only equipment, but also safe, designated cycling paths that can create a cycling boom or bust within a particular town or city.

These rates are not necessarily impacted by income level, but the purposes for cycling oftentimes are. For example, the study in Transportation Research also found that low-income people bike mainly for utilitarian purposes and high-income people bike more for recreation and exercise.

