

You and your bicycle



Learn the basic skills of cycling - practice off the road

If you are a beginner or lack confidence as a cyclist, then Zone 1 is for you!

All Zone 1 exercises are designed for practice in a quiet area. This will help to keep you safe and stress-free whilst you learn the important cycling skills needed before using roads.

Zone 1 will show you how to:

- look after yourself and your bicycle
- develop skills in observation and signalling
- prepare for cycling on quiet roads as part of the traffic

There is also essential information about the Law which you should know before using roads.

1 What type of bicycle should I buy? (a guide to the main types of bicycle)



Hybrid/City/Utility bike

- Designed for daily mixed urban/sub-urban use, often have rear carrier rack and mudguards or at least built-in fittings for these
- 'Normal' size wheels (ask for 700 x 28c) with average size tyres -not skinny as in Road bikes nor wide and knobbly as in Mountain Bikes
- Normally have 15-21 'derailleur' gears, though some have 'hub' (hidden) gears on rear axle
- Best for general leisure, shopping, commuting and utility cycling on most journeys of 5 miles or less. Can easily be used over un-surfaced paths but not very rough ground.
- Features include straight handlebars –'bent back' ones are also available
- They normally have horizontal crossbars, but these sometimes slope down towards saddle –women's version especially

You and your bicycle



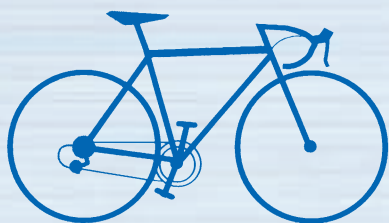
Mountain bike - MtB (all terrain bikes - ATBs)

- Designed originally for off road cycling but now often used (sometimes mis-sold) for general cycling as there's a wide choice of types available
- Smaller wheels (26") than most other styles of bicycle and always multiple 'derailleur' gears –frequently at least 21 gears
- Often do not have fixings for mudguards or carrier racks.
- Straight handlebars, hi-tech brakes and suspension are common features
- Most suitable for off-road cycling over rough ground, though many are used and adapted for urban on-road and leisure cycling, provided thinner/smoothier tyres are fitted



Touring bicycle

- Designed for comfortable commuting and most especially mid to longer distance cycling and load carrying
- Built with a standard frame design and wheel size (typically 700 x 28c tyre size) - though some specialist 'Audax' tourers have 26" wheels
- Drop handlebars and good quality components are common features. Typically 21 speed or more derailleur gears are standard fittings
- Rear (and sometimes front) carriers are standard as are mudguards front and rear
- Suitable for daily/occasional commuting, carrying shopping, goods and materials
- Also suitable for off-road cycle paths but less so on very rough ground



Road/racing bike

- Designed for speed and road use, not suitable for off road
- Often very light, and minimalist in terms of accessories
- Hi-tech and specialist frames and components (commonly seen on the Tour de France/Tour of Britain cycle races)
- Features include standard wheel size but often very thin tyres (700 x 21c). Typically 21 speed or more derailleur gears are standard fittings
- Rarely have mudguards and carriers or fittings for them
- These bicycles are built for fast road riding and racing. They are not suitable for carrying loads

NOTE. There are many other types of bicycle such as folders, recumbents and BMX, as well as variations on all the above types particularly Hybrid bikes.

You and your bicycle



2 Does your bicycle fit you ?

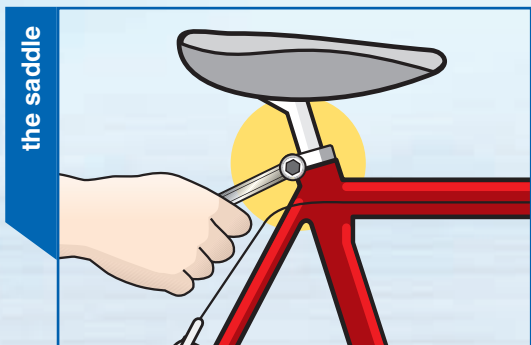
A bicycle which is the wrong size for you is hard to handle.

Complete this "BIKE-FIT" check list.

Bike-Fit - when sitting on the saddle:	Yes	No
Can you reach the handlebars without stretching ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you rest your fingers on the brake levers easily and comfortably without leaning too far forward?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With your legs straight, can you touch the ground with the balls of your feet? (fleshy part of your foot near the toes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

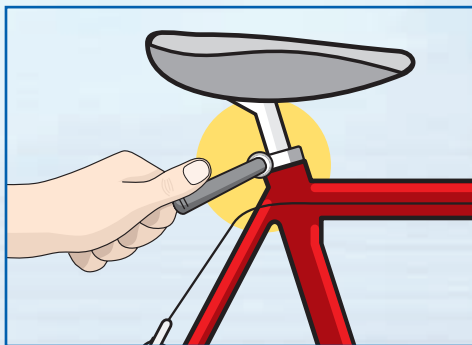
Checklist

If you answer **NO** to any of the questions above, the bike may be the wrong size or your handlebars and saddle may need adjustment. . .

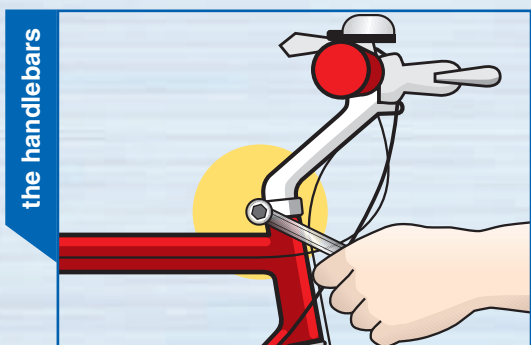


the saddle

Loosen the nut, twist the saddle up or down, then **tighten** the nut.

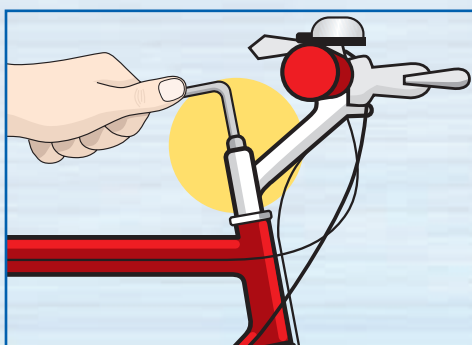


OR Use the quick release and do not go beyond the maximum marking on the seat post.



the handlebars

Loosen the nut, pull the handlebars up or down, then **retighten** the nut.



OR Loosen the stem bolt with an allen key. After moving the stem, **retighten**.

If in doubt seek advice from your local cycle dealer

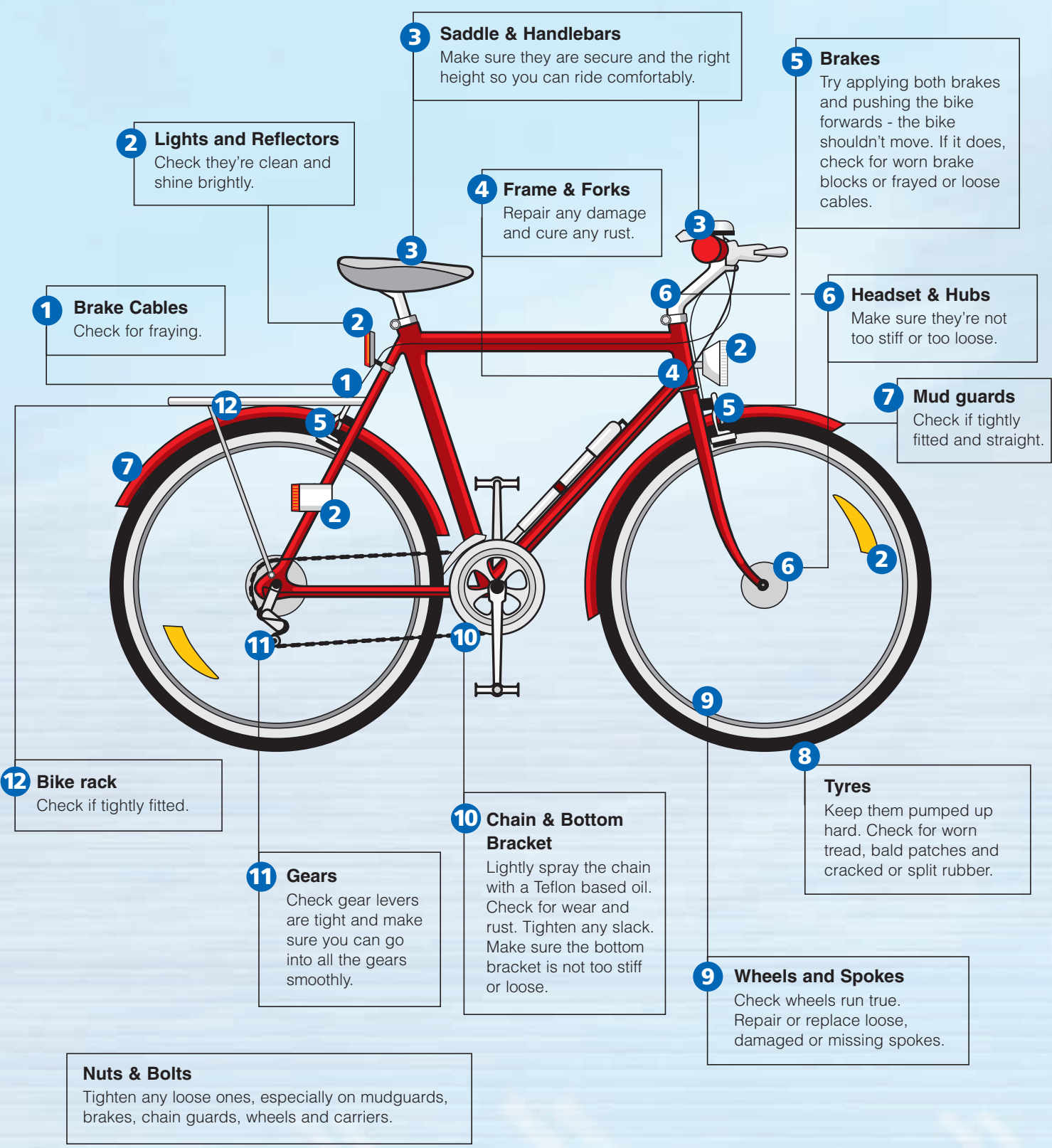


NOTE: Some beginners like to sit on a lower saddle at first to enable them to "scoot" with their feet whilst they learn to balance.

You and your bicycle

3 Is your bike fit to use?

Your bicycle handbook, and your cycle dealer can help you to make sure that YOUR bicycle is safe. Here are some simple checks that you can do on your own.



Only carry out necessary adjustments or repairs if you know what to do.
If you are unsure, take your bike to your local cycle dealer for help and advice.



You and your bicycle



4 Bike Check List

This list will help you to check that the bicycle is in good working order and identify adjustments and repairs that may be needed before you set off.

Tick off each check as you do it and note any adjustments/repairs needed in the 'Action Box'.

	OK	Faulty	Action
Front brakes Levers and blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Back brakes Levers and blocks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Brake cables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Tyres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reflectors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Front lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Rear lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Saddle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Handlebars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Nuts and bolts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Headset, hub Bottom bracket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Pedals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Chain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Gears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Gear changers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Frame and forks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Wheels & spokes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Mudguards (where fitted)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
Bike rack (where fitted)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

You and your bicycle



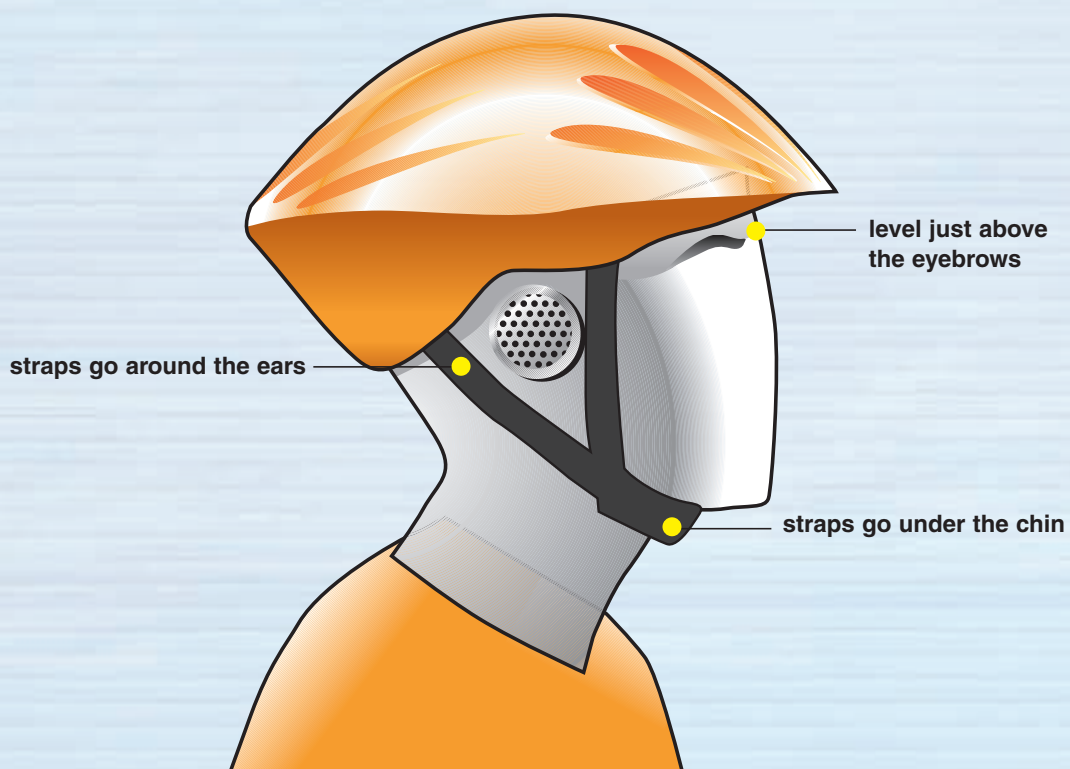
5 Buying a helmet

- Is your helmet brand new? Never buy a second hand helmet because it may have had an impact.
- Make sure that your helmet has one of the following approved safety standards: BS EN 1078; SNELL B-95; SNELL B-94; AS/NZS 2063.
- Measure around your head about 2.5 cms (1 inch) above your eyebrows to match your helmet size with your head size.
- Try on your helmet, pressing it down firmly on your head and ensuring that the front lies just 2.5 cms (1 inch) above your eyebrows.

Using a helmet

- The helmet straps go around your ears and then fasten firmly under your chin.
- If your helmet moves when you nod your head, you may need to use the "padding" kit to make it more secure.

Helmets are designed to take just one hard knock and MUST always be replaced after any impact.



A cycle helmet will reduce your risk of injury if you fall off your bicycle.



Getting Started



1 Choosing an area for practice

A clear, quiet area, off the road, which is level or has a very gentle slope downhill is the best place to learn how to handle your bicycle.

From the start, practise getting on and off your bicycle on the left hand side (the kerb side). This will be safer as the bicycle remains between you and passing vehicles when you use roads.



2 Getting to grips with your brakes

Understand how your brakes work, by walking with your bicycle at first.

The **back brake** is usually operated by the **left hand**.

The **front brake** has the most stopping power and is usually operated by the **right hand**.

Brake when your bicycle is upright and travelling in a straight line. The easiest braking method is to squeeze both the rear and front brake levers together, steadily and evenly, to come to a controlled stop. This will help you avoid skidding.

If brake levers are pressed sharply and separately:

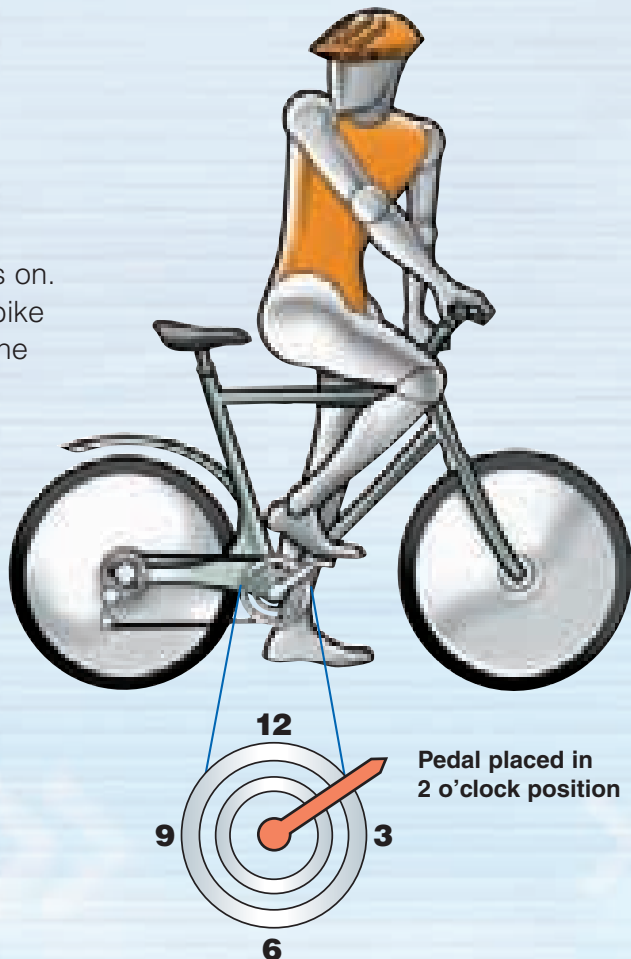
- **The rear brake can make the bicycle skid**
- **The front brake can make the rider go over the handlebars**

If you start to skid, release the brakes and apply them again steadily and evenly.



3 The Starting Position

- Always get on and off your bike on the left (the kerb side).
- Hold on to the handlebars with both brakes on. With your left foot on the ground, lean the bike towards you as you lift your right leg over the frame.
- Put the right pedal in the "2 o'clock" position. This will give you the power and balance needed to set off.
- Always look over your right shoulder to check what is going on behind you before you move off. This is called 'The Life Saver'.
- Once you set off, sit on the saddle.



Getting Started

ZONE

1

OFF THE ROAD

4 Practise good balance without wobbling

You may like to “push” with both feet as you sit on a slightly lowered saddle to help to gain confidence and a sense of balance as you learn to cycle.

Scooting: Another way of learning to balance is to sit on the saddle, put your right foot on the pedal and use your left foot for scooting.

Small steering movements will help you to remain upright.

A friend can help you by:

- Holding the saddle as you start off
- Standing behind, or beside you and giving you a gentle push forward to get you started.



5 Riding Position

Always sit on the saddle. To keep full control keep both hands on the handlebar grips so that fingers can reach each brake lever easily and quickly.

6 Pedal Power

Always push the pedals with the balls of your feet. This will give you more control and pedal power.



Getting Started



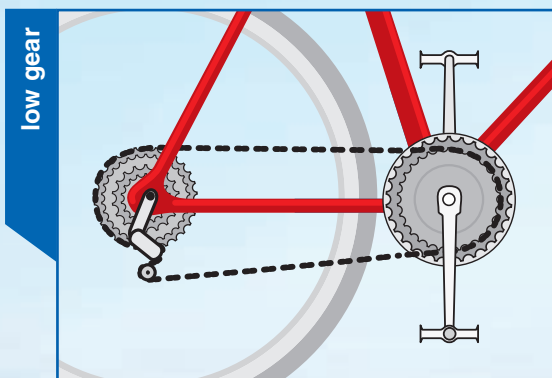
7 Stopping in an emergency

Practise emergency stops in a quiet area. Learn how to brake quickly and evenly without skidding or losing control of the bicycle.

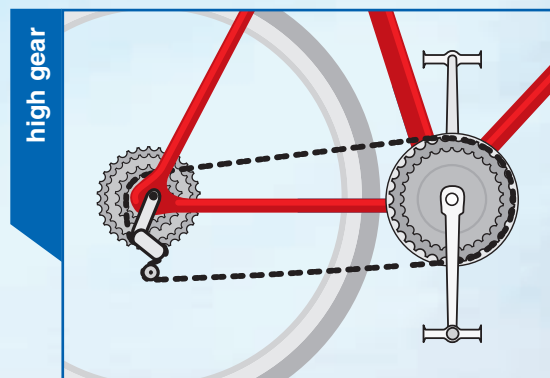
8 Gears

Bicycles have gears so that it's easier to start, pedal up hills, and then go faster on level ground or downhill.

Bicycles have different numbers of gears. Some just have one and others have over 20. The gears let you change the amount that the bike moves forward with each full turn of the pedal. The chain moves from cog to cog as you change gear.



Low gears are for starting off and going up hills. The steeper the hill the lower the gear you will need to use. (front shown with guard removed)



Higher gears are for level ground and downhill. Some bikes have extra gears by the pedals. These give you a bigger range of gears when you need to change them.

Changing gear

The gears are changed by levers or twistgrip handles on the handlebars. In a quite flat area, practise and experiment with changing gear. You need to pedal at the same time as you change gear.

Remember: If it's hard to pedal, change to a lower gear.
If it's easy to pedal, change to a higher gear.

Getting Started



9 Bicycle Handling Skills

This section helps you to develop your ability to control your bicycle smoothly and balance without wobbling. It will also help you to learn to pedal and stop effectively.

You can practise in a safe area, off the road, using easy markers such as rope and some obstacles. You will also need two large cardboard boxes and plastic bottles.

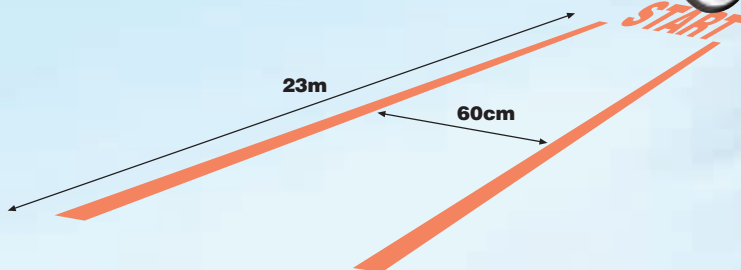
These exercises are easy to practise on your own.

Note: Cycle slowly in the middle of the marked track to develop your bicycle control, balance and steering ability.



Follow the line

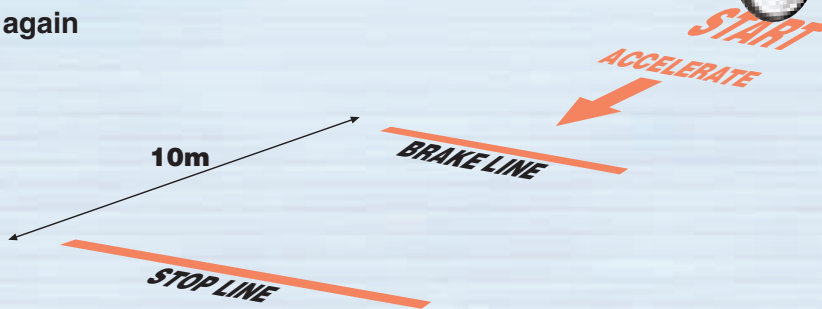
Start with a wide track at first and narrow it as your skill level improves.



The Brake Box

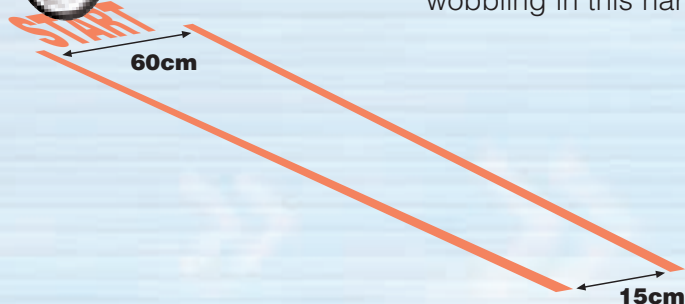
Helps you to practise stopping safely without skidding. Accelerate towards the brake line. Once the front wheel reaches the brake line, apply both brakes steadily and evenly and stop just before the second line without skidding.

Remember: If you start to skid, release the brakes and apply them again steadily and evenly.



The Funnel

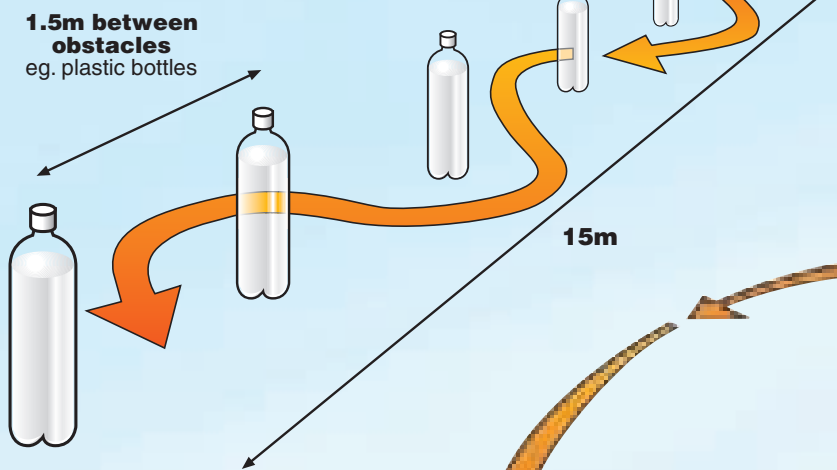
You should learn to cycle smoothly without wobbling in this narrowing track.



Getting Started

9 *continued*
The Slalom

Cycle around the obstacles steadily and smoothly, using your brakes and pedals to make progress. You can move the markers closer together to make the slalom more difficult.



The Life Saver

In preparation for cycling on roads practise looking over your right shoulder whilst keeping good control of your bicycle.



5m

pick up bottle



The Bottle Snatch

Helps you practise taking a hand off the handlebars whilst keeping bicycle control. For safety reasons use a plastic bottle. Try completing this exercise by using each hand to prepare you for signalling on the road.

Preparing for the road



1 Be Bright, Be Seen

Whether cycling in the daytime or at night, always make sure that your clothing is easily seen by drivers. Fluorescent material shows up in the daytime but does not work at night. Reflective material reacts with car headlights and is easily seen in the dark. Clothing made from fluorescent material with bands of reflective material is the best option. Many other fluorescent/reflective items can be purchased to make you more visible, like bands, sashes and belts.

- **Make sure that your clothing is suitable for cycling.**
- **Avoid baggy clothing which may get tangled or cover the lights after dark.**
- **Never carry bags on the handlebars or in your hands. If you need to carry something use a fitted carrier or a small, light rucksack on your back.**

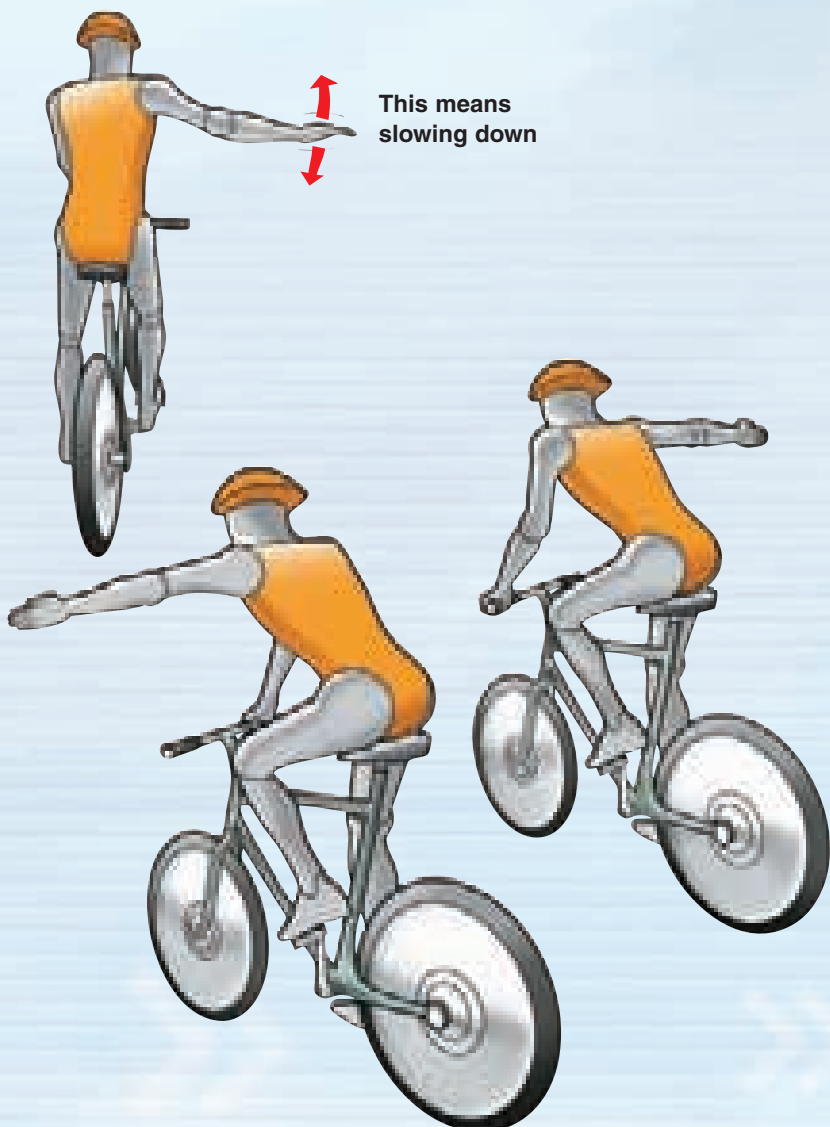


2 Arm Signals

Always look over your shoulder before signalling. Arm signals are used by cyclists to warn other road users that they are about to start off, slow down, stop or change direction.

Practise giving clear arm signals, off the road, until they can be carried out for at least three seconds without wobbling or losing control of your bicycle.

You should practise signals for turning left, slowing down or stopping and for starting off/turning right as shown here. Return your hand to the handlebars before turning.



3 Bike Parking

Always lock your bike securely when you park it. Try to lock your bike to a purpose built cycle parking stand. Your bike should never be left where it is an obstruction for walkers and other road users.

Preparing for the road



4 The Law, the Highway Code and the Cyclist

When on the road, a cyclist has similar rights and responsibilities as any other road user. You should learn the law and guidance given in the Highway Code.

Main points to remember

- You must obey all traffic signs and traffic signals and ensure that you never ride under the influence of drink or drugs
- When there are no cycle lanes, always cycle on the left, with traffic, on the road
- Cycling on pavements is illegal unless signs indicate otherwise
- Riding in the dark without lights is illegal. By law, your bicycle must always have a white front light, a rear red light and a rear red reflector. (and amber pedal reflectors, if bicycle was manufactured after 1.10.85). White front reflector and spoke reflectors will also help you to be seen
- You are not permitted to carry a passenger on a bicycle unless it is a tandem (i.e. a bicycle for two people). However, you are permitted to carry a young child up to about 4 years old in a child seat specifically for bicycles
- Cyclists should ride in single file on busy, narrow roads and never ride more than two abreast on wider roads
- Cyclists can use bus lanes - if the sign says so
- Retailers must sell all new bicycles with a bell fitted - use it
- Your bicycle must have properly working front and rear brakes
- Cyclists may ride across toucan crossings (specially designed for pedestrians and cyclists) but not across pelicans, puffins or zebra crossings which are for pedestrians
- Always walk across wheeling your bicycle

Preparing for the road



5 Road Signs and Markings



No cycling



No entry for all vehicles (including pedal cycles)



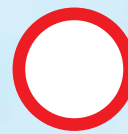
No motor vehicles (cycling permitted)



No right turn



No left turn



No vehicles



Give way



Give way at roundabout



Road works



Traffic merges from left



School



No through road except for pedal cycles



Routes for cyclists only



Route shared with pedestrians (Please keep to the left)



Route shared with pedestrians but with dividing line



Give way at mini-roundabout



Ahead only



Keep left



Turn left in front of the sign



turn left past the sign



Route for cyclists - but other vehicles may be on it



On road cycle lane



Start of an on-road cycle lane



Start of bus lane where cycles are allowed



Ground markings indicate segregated route for pedal cycles and pedestrians only (please keep to the correct side)

Checklist



The basic skills of cycling - off the road

You have almost completed all the exercises in Zone 1.

Once you have had lots of practice and gained good bicycle handling skills and confidence off the road, please complete the checklist below.

Can you. . .

	Yes	No
Stay upright without wobbling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get on and off the bicycle properly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start off with control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stop and complete an emergency stop effectively?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pedal smoothly and powerfully?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Steer and maintain forward progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cycle one handed and maintain each type of clear signal for at least three seconds without wobbling or losing control of your bicycle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look behind whilst keeping good control of your bicycle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use gears?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you. . .

	Yes	No
Know how to check your bicycle for faults and keep it safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Know about clothing and equipment for safe cycling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a good theoretical knowledge of the Highway Code and the "Law and Cyclists"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered 'YES' to all the questions on the checklist. . .

Congratulations! You have completed Zone One.

If you would like to progress to cycling on quiet roads you can move on to Zone 2.



Congratulations!

You have completed



and know how to:

- look after yourself and your bicycle ●
- develop your skills in observation and signalling ●
- prepare for cycling on quiet roads as part of the traffic ●

Name

