



good cycling practice

Do you – or would you – cycle in Reading?

If the answer is

'yes'

then the following guidance is relevant to you



Bicycle facts for beginners



1 Does your bike fit you?

Bikes come in many sizes – get the right one!

- your toes must touch the ground when you are seated
- the saddle and handlebars should be at the same height
- the distance from the middle of the handlebars to the front of the saddle, should be the same as your elbow to fingertip
- are you balanced and in control of the bike?

2 How can I stop my bike from being stolen?

- lock it to something with a good padlock and strong chain, or use a D lock
- record the frame number – have the bike stamped with your post code
- insure it!

3 Is my bike safe?

Make regular checks, for example –

- do the brakes work and how good would they be in an emergency?
- are the brake blocks worn or not making contact with the wheel rims?
- are the brake or gear cables frayed – do they need lubrication or adjustment?
- if the chain keeps coming off, does it need oiling or adjustment?
- has mud and grease built up around the gear cogs?
- have any nuts and bolts come loose? investigate any unusual noises
- are the tyres in good condition and inflated properly or are they worn or split?
- are the wheels buckled?
- do you feel in control?

4 What do I do if I get a puncture?

Think about this before you go off on a ten mile ride into the country! Always tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.

- take a puncture repair kit – even if you don't know how to use it, you may get help from someone who does
- take a bicycle pump!

5 What should I take on a journey?

If you are going to be more than a phone call or easy walking distance away from help –

- bulbs and batteries for lights
- brake and gear cables
- a few nuts and bolts

Can't maintain the bike yourself?

Buy a guide book, or ask a mechanically minded friend to help you, or find a good repair shop to do it for you

Further recommended reading

The Haynes Bicycle Book ISBN 1563921375 £12.00

The Highway Code ISBN 0115619777 £1.50

<http://members.aol.com/biketune/index.html>

- brake blocks
- puncture repair kit/inner tube/valve/valve caps
- spare keys for your bicycle lock!
- money for telephone/taxi
- a brightly coloured weather-proof coat

6 What tools do I need?

For simple repairs –

- pair of small adjustable spanners or a box spanner to fit common sizes of nut
- pair of tyre levers
- thin spanners for getting into small spaces
- Allen/hex key to fit saddle/handlebar
- puncture repair kit
- bicycle pump
- a rag to clean yourself

Accidents

Any serious accidents off campus must be reported to the Police

If you are a student or visitor and become involved in a cycling accident on Campus, please report it to the Security Office (ext 7799) as soon as you can

If you are an employee of the University, you must report any accident occurring on campus to your departmental Area Safety Co-ordinator

Interesting facts

- most victims of traffic accidents involving cyclists are male and aged 18–24
- the most common excuses of car drivers involved in such accidents are
'I didn't see the cyclist' or
'I didn't expect the cyclist to do that'
- 70% of cycle fatalities are due to head injuries – wear a helmet!
- you are at risk

Do you know the Highway Code?

It details the law relating to road users – including cyclists – in the UK

you MUST

- cycle on the left hand side of the road
- obey all traffic signs and traffic light signals
- keep to the side designated for cyclists on shared pedestrian/cycle lanes
- use lit front and rear lights at night (LEDs alone are not permitted), have a red rear reflector, and amber pedal reflectors
- ensure that your brakes work properly

you MUST NOT

- cycle on the pavement (as opposed to the shared paths on Campus)
- cycle the wrong way down a one-way street
- ride under the influence of drink or drugs
- carry a passenger, unless the bike is designed for it
- hold onto a moving vehicle or trailer
- leave your bike where it would endanger or obstruct other road users or pedestrians

You can be **FINED** for any of the above offences – £2,500 for dangerous cycling, £1,000 for careless cycling, and £500 for cycling on the pavement.

Look ahead, keep alert, expect the unexpected – everybody makes mistakes!

How do I avoid injury whilst cycling?

- **signal your intentions**
car drivers and pedestrians are not telepathic
- **be seen**
always wear something light-coloured, reflective or fluorescent
- **be obvious to car drivers**
ride at least 50 cm from the pavement – and avoid slippery drain covers
- **slow down when passing pedestrians**
they may not hear you. Give them plenty of room and warn them by calling out politely, or fit a bell to your bike – and use it!
- **be aware when overtaking parked vehicles**
a car door may open in your path or a child could run into the road
- **be prepared to get off your bike**
and wheel it across the road when making a right turn onto or from a major road
- **brake slowly and evenly**
your stopping distance in wet weather can be up to 11.5 m (40 ft)
- **take extra care in bad weather**
it causes problems for all road users
- **don't use personal stereos**
concentrate on the road!
- **ensure trousers and shoelaces don't get caught in pedals**
use cycle clips, and double knot shoelaces
- **don't use toe clips in slow traffic**
you could lose your balance
- **never carry anything on the handle bars**
it may get trapped in the front wheel – use panniers or a rucksack
- **make regular maintenance checks**
see overleaf
- **fit a mirror to your bike**
to check on the traffic behind
- **last, but not least, wear a helmet**
ensure that it is CE marked and fits you properly

Reading has fast and overcrowded roads.

Get off the bike and walk if you feel unsafe.

Don't take unnecessary risks - nobody likes hospitals!

Know your bike

- 1 saddle
- 2 handlebars
- 3 brake pulls
- 4 brake and gear cables
- 5 brake blocks
- 6 forks
- 7 wheels, tyres & metal wheel rims – inner tube is inside tyre
- 8 spokes
- 9 chain
- 10 derailleur gears
- 11 rear sprockets
- 12 front sprockets
- 13 pedal
- 14 rear reflector
- 15 wheel reflectors

