

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF BICYCLING

- I. Wear a helmet for every ride and use lights at night
- II. Conduct an ABC Quick Check before every ride
- III. Obey traffic laws: ride on the right, slowest traffic farthest to right
- IV. Ride predictably and be visible at all times
- V. At intersections, ride in the right-most lane that goes in your direction
- VI. Scan for traffic and signal lane changes and turns
- VII. Be prepared for mechanical emergencies with tools and know-how
- VIII. Control your bike by practicing bike handling skills
- IX. Drink before you are thirsty and eat before you are hungry
- X. Have fun

ABC QUICK CHECK

1. **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
2. **B is for brakes**
 - Inspect pads for wear; replace if there is less than ¼" 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
3. **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
4. **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 quick releases to insure that they have been re-engaged
5. **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



SHARING THE PATH

1. **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
2. **Announce when passing**
 - Use a bell, horn or voice to indicate your intention to pass
 - Warn other well in advance so you do not startle them
 - Clearly announce "On your left" when passing
3. **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
4. **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
5. **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
6. **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
7. **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
8. **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
9. **Clean up litter**
 - Pack out more than you pack in
 - Encourage others to respect the path
 - Place all litter in its proper receptacle
10. **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



SHARING THE ROAD: CYCLISTS

1. Ride on the right
 - Always ride in the same direction as traffic
 - Use the lane furthest to the right that heads in the direction that you are traveling
 - Slower moving cyclists and motorists stay to the right
2. On the road
 - The same laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists
 - Obey all traffic control devices, such as stop signs, lights, and lane markings
 - Always use hand signals to indicate your intention to stop or turn to motorists and cyclists
3. 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 any impact that affects your helmet, visible or not, replace it immediately
4. Ride predictably
 - Ride in a straight line and don't swerve in the road or between parked cars
 - Check for oncoming traffic before entering any street or intersection
 - Anticipate hazards and adjust position in traffic accordingly
5. Be visible
 - Wear brightly colored clothing at all times
 - At night, use a white front light, red rear light or reflector and reflective tape or clothing
 - Make eye contact with motorists to let them know you are there

SHARING THE ROAD: MOTORISTS

1. Drive cautiously
 - Reduce speed when encountering cyclists
 - In inclement weather, give cyclists extra trailing and passing room
 - Recognize situations that may be potentially dangerous to cyclists and give them space
2. Yield to cyclists
 - Cyclists are considered vehicles and should be given the appropriate right of way
 - Cyclists may take the entire lane when hazards, road width or traffic speed dictate
 - Motorists should allow extra time for cyclists to traverse intersections
3. Be considerate
 - Scan for cyclists in traffic and at intersections
 - Do not blast your horn in close proximity to cyclists
 - Look for cyclists when opening doors
4. Pass with care
 - Leave at least three feet of space between your car and a cyclist when passing
 - Wait until road and traffic conditions allow you to safely pass
 - Check over your shoulder after passing a cyclist before moving back to normal position
5. Watch for children
 - Children on bicycles are often unpredictable - expect the unexpected and slow down
 - Most children don't have adequate knowledge of traffic laws
 - Children are harder to see because they are typically smaller than adults



HOW FAR RIGHT?

1. **Laws**
 - Most bicycle laws use the same language regarding where cyclists should drive
 - Directions to ride "as far to the right as practicable" appears in most laws
 - No clear definition of practicable has been identified
2. **Safety**
 - Do not ride where you are subject to poor road conditions constant hazards
 - Give yourself ample room to your right to maneuver in an emergency
 - Ride in the right third of the lane if there is not sufficient room for lane sharing
3. **Traffic rules**
 - Slower moving vehicles travel to the right of faster moving ones
 - Motorists are looking for other vehicles in or near the travel lanes, not against curbs
 - Follow the same rules as motorists including yielding right-of-way and signaling
4. **Wide lanes**
 - Ride just to the right of the travel lane to remain visible to other motorists
 - Ride at least 3 feet from parked cars in all situations; consider this a right side limit
 - Always ride in a straight line; do not swerve between parked cars
5. **Hazards**
 - If a lane narrows ahead or is blocked by a bus, establish your position in traffic early
 - Avoid riding where glass and other trash accumulates on the right side of roadways
 - Grates and gutters should be avoided by positioning yourself away from them

LANE POSITIONING

1. **Ride on the right**
 - Ride in the same direction as traffic; stay far enough away from curb to avoid hazards
 - Ride in the right third of the right-most lane that goes in the direction you are going
 - Take the entire lane if traveling the same speed as traffic or in a narrow lane
2. **Visibility**
 - Always ride in or near a travel lane; stay visible by riding where drivers are looking
 - Wear bright clothing at night as well as during the day
 - Do not pass on the right; motorists are not looking for other vehicles there
3. **Parked cars**
 - Ride in a straight line, not in and out of parked cars on the side of the road
 - Beware of cars merging into the roadway from a parallel parking position
 - Always ride far enough away from parked cars to avoid hitting a surprise open door
4. **Take the lane**
 - If there is insufficient road width for cyclists and cars
 - If traveling the same speed as other traffic or if hazards narrow the usable width
 - Before intersections and turns to assert your position on the roadway
5. **Extra wide lanes**
 - Do not ride completely to the right; you will be more visible 3-4 feet away from traffic
 - Right turning cars and cars entering will be more likely to see you before they turn
 - Be careful of motorists passing on the right around left-turning vehicles



TURNS AND TURN LANES

- 1. Positioning for turns**
 - Before a turn: scan, signal and move into the lane that leads to your destination
 - Ride in the right third or middle of the lane, as lane width dictates
 - To traverse multiple lanes, move one at a time, scanning and signaling each move
- 2. Avoiding turn lanes**
 - If your lane turns into a right turn only lane, change lanes before the intersection
 - Changing lanes too late could result in an overtaking motorist turning in front of you
 - Maintain a constant position relative to the curb or shoulder during a turn
- 3. Beware of blind spots**
 - Most drivers do not always expect to see cyclists on the roadway
 - Do not ride next to another vehicle unless you are in a different lane or passing
 - If you can't see bus, truck or car mirrors, drivers can't see you
- 4. Signaling**
 - Signal well before the intersection; make sure you are in proper lane position
 - Left arm out and down with palm to the rear to indicate stopping
 - Left or right arm straight out to indicate left or right turn
- 5. Scan**
 - Constant identification of potential hazards in front and behind as well as to each side
 - Scanning allows you to avoid dangerous situations before they happen
 - Scan for motorists, road conditions, pedestrians, animals, traffic signals

LANE CHANGING IN TRAFFIC

- 1. Plan ahead**
 - If you are familiar with the traffic patterns, be sure to get in the correct position early
 - Keep in mind the relative speed between you and other traffic; plan accordingly
 - Be aware of road conditions that would impede your progress across lanes
- 2. Scan**
 - Look for traffic, pedestrians and hazards in front of you and behind
 - Identify lane markings and traffic control devices affecting next intersection
 - Note bus stops, driveways, crosswalks and other special traffic zones
- 3. Signal**
 - Signal your intention to turn or change lanes if your speed is near other traffic
 - Signaling may not be necessary if overtaking traffic speeds won't allow time to see it
 - Signal only if you think that oncoming traffic can react safely
- 4. Act**
 - Relative speed may require you to move quickly and decisively when it is safe to do so
 - In high speed overtaking traffic situations, cross all lanes at once when safe
 - Move after signaling in low- and same-speed traffic situations
- 5. Improvise**
 - If you get caught between lanes while crossing traffic, ride the white line until clear
 - Your safety is paramount while changing lanes; if traffic is too heavy, use crosswalks
 - Ride to red light then move to left turn lane if volume and speed do not allow crossing



HOW TO AVOID GETTING DOORED

1. **Lane positioning**
 - Ride at least three feet from parked cars
 - Never swerve between parked cars; use the outside of the next car as your guide
 - Avoid riding on the right side of any stopped car, especially if it is near the curb
2. **Speed positioning**
 - As you begin to overtake cars in urban settings, always pass them on your right
 - If you are traveling at the same speed as traffic, ride in the center of your lane
 - As traffic begins to speed up, signal and begin moving to a lane on your right
3. **Sudden stops**
 - If a car stops in front of you suddenly, stop, look for exiting passengers, then pass on left
 - Make sure that you stop safely before you release the handlebar to signal and pass
 - Maintaining control of your bicycle is the most important task
4. **Intersections**
 - Before turning, look for cars double-parked in your destination lane
 - When turning, take the lane so you don't get forced to the right of a stopped car
 - Plan your turn so that you remain at least three feet to the left of any stopped cars
5. **Bike lanes**
 - You do not have to ride within a bike lane if you are avoiding a hazard
 - Cars must not drive in bike lanes but bikes may leave bike lanes at any time
 - Regardless of bike lane position, never ride within three feet of any parked car

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

1. **Obey, obey, obey**
 - Cyclists, just like motorists, must obey all traffic control devices
 - It takes longer to travel through an intersection on bike; plan to stop for yellow lights
 - Avoid cars that run red lights by waiting for the signal to turn green and scan to make sure it's clear
2. **Detection**
 - Bicycles must activate a vehicle detector just like a motor vehicle
 - Detectors are embedded in the roadway; look for squares cut into the roadway
 - Detectors use magnetic forces to pick up vehicles, not weight
3. **Unresponsive signals**
 - In most states, after three minutes, you can treat a red light as a stop sign
 - Pass through a red light only as a last resort
 - Yield to other vehicles while crossing the roadway



HOW TO COMMUTE BY BICYCLE

1. **Sharing the road**
 - Bicycles are vehicles and should act and be treated as such on the roadways
 - Laws that apply to motorists apply to cyclists as well; ride on the right, with traffic
 - Ride in the right-most lane that goes in the direction that you are travelling
2. **Signals and signs**
 - Obey all stop signs, traffic lights and lane markings
 - Look before you change lanes or signal a turn; indicate your intention, then act
 - Identify hazards and adjust your position on the roadway accordingly
3. **Safety**
 - If the lane is too narrow or you are going the same speed as traffic, take the lane
 - Be visible and predictable at all times; wear bright clothing and signal turns
 - Always wear a helmet to protect your head in the event of a crash
4. **Route choice**
 - Consider distance, traffic volume, road width and condition, and terrain
 - Some routes may be a bit longer but much more pleasant; carry a map for detours
 - Allow extra time for a new route; try riding different routes on the weekend
5. **Bike parking**
 - Try to find an indoor parking area in your office or building in which to keep your bike
 - Lock your bike to an immovable object in a highly visible area out of the elements
 - Ask your employer or building owner to provide safe, covered parking
6. **Clothing optional**
 - If you have a short commute, ride in your work clothes at a relaxed pace
 - Cycling specific clothing is an option for longer, more strenuous rides
 - Use waterproof and breathable fabrics to stay comfortable and dry
7. **Showering**
 - Showering should not be necessary in the morning when it is cool outside
 - Many workplaces have showers located in the building; inquire about access
 - Some health clubs offer shower-only memberships for a few dollars a month
8. **The bike**
 - Any bike that you feel comfortable on will work; make sure it is in good working order
 - Consider weather protection such as fenders and a rack for carrying capacity
 - Invest in a rechargeable headlight; helmet and handlebar mounts are available
9. **Maintenance**
 - Have your bike checked over by your local bike shop
 - Learn how to repair a flat, fix a chain and inspect your brake pads for wear
 - Replace tires when they are worn out; use tire liners if you experience excessive flats
10. **Weather**
 - Heat, cold and precipitation require special preparation for you and your bike
 - Fenders and rain gear keep out the rain; use layers and wind proofing for cold days
 - Some cycling-specific gear can provide relief on hot days; it keeps you cool and dry



OVERCOMING BIKE COMMUTING EXCUSES

1. **I'm out of shape**
 - Ride at an easy pace; In a few months you will be in great shape
 - Ride your route on a weekend to find the easiest way to work
 - You will improve your fitness level when you become a regular bike commuter
2. **It takes too long**
 - The average commuter travels at 10 mph; the more you ride, the faster you will get
 - Trips of less than three miles will be quicker by bike
 - Trips of five to seven miles in urban areas may take the same time or less as by car
3. **It's too far**
 - Try riding to work and taking mass transit home, then alternating the next day
 - Combine riding and mass transit to shorten your commute
 - Ride to a coworker's house and carpool to work
4. **No bike parking**
 - Look around for a storage area in your building or office
 - Stash your bike in a covered, secure place such as a closet or even your office
 - Formally request that your employer provide bike parking or lock it up outside
5. **My bike is beat up**
 - Tell a reputable bike shop that you are commuting and have them tune up your bike
 - If you can't maintain your bike yourself, identify bike shops near your route
 - Make sure that your bike is reliable and in good working order before you start riding
6. **No showers**
 - Most commuters don't shower at work; ride at an easy pace to stay cool and dry
 - Ride home at a fast pace if you want a workout; shower when you get there
 - Health clubs offer showers; get a discounted membership for showers only
7. **I have to dress up**
 - Keep multiple sets of clothing at work; rotate them on days you drive
 - Have work clothes cleaned at nearby laundromats or dry cleaners
 - Pack clothes with you and change at work; try rolling clothes instead of folding
8. **It's raining**
 - Fenders for your bike and raingear for your body will keep you dry
 - If you are at work, take transit or carpool to get home; ride home the next day
 - Take transit or drive if you don't have the gear to ride comfortably in the rain
9. **The roads aren't safe**
 - Obey traffic signs, ride on the right, signal turns, stop at lights, wear bright clothing
 - You are at no greater risk than driving a car
 - Wear a helmet every time you ride
10. **I have to run errands**
 - Bolt a rack to the back of your bike to add carrying capacity
 - Make sure that you have a lock to secure your bike while you are in a building
 - Allow yourself extra time to get to scheduled appointments and find parking



HOW TO RIDE IN BIKE LANES

1. **Safety considerations**
 - Bikes are not required to travel in bike lanes when preparing for turns
 - Never ride within three feet of parked cars; beware of the door zone
 - Avoid bike lanes that you think are poorly designed or unsafe; alert your local government
2. **Intersections**
 - Avoid riding in lanes that position you on the right side of a right turn lane
 - Bike lanes should stop before an intersection to allow for bikes to make left turns
 - Always signal as you move out of a bike lane into another traffic lane
3. **Debris**
 - Report obstructions and poor maintenance to your local government
 - Avoid riding immediately adjacent to curbs where trash collects
 - If debris forces you out of the bike lane, signal your move out into traffic
4. **Parked cars**
 - Never ride within three feet of parked cars
 - Watch for brake lights, front wheels, signals and driver movements
 - Position yourself in the field of vision of a motorist pulling out of a parking space
5. **Right turns**
 - Avoid riding in lanes that position you on the right side of a right turning motorist
 - Move out of the right turn lane if you are not turning right
 - Ride in the rightmost lane that goes in the direction that you are travelling
6. **Left turns**
 - Move out of the bike lane well in advance of the intersection; signal every move
 - Position yourself in the rightmost left-turning lane
 - Reposition yourself after executing the turn; remain clear of parked cars

