



Youth Cycling Guide



Biking is a great way to travel while being physically active. Learn how to cycle safely and have fun!



In this guide...

You will find the most important things that you need to know as a young cyclist.

Cycling is one of the best ways to get to where you need to go. It is great for your health, good for the environment, and tons of fun! Make sure to be as safe as you can when you are on your bike. Use the handy tips from this guide to help you be the best cyclist on the block.

For Parents

It is important that adult supervisors understand the material in this guide and help children to learn the foundational cycling skills that are featured in this book.

Parachute Canada recommends that younger children be accompanied by adults or older children when riding. Children under 10-years old should generally not ride their bicycles in traffic. This is because depth perception and critical thinking skills are developed over time, so younger cyclists should be supervised at all times to ensure that they stay safe.

Always make sure to lead by example by demonstrating safe cycling skills and behaviour.



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please call 905-668-4113 ext. 2551.

The Helmet

Whenever you ride your bike, you should wear a helmet. It can keep you safe by absorbing the force of an impact. Plus, it's the law if you're under 18!

Helmets should be replaced every five years. If your helmet has been hit or dropped hard enough to crack the foam, replace it right away.

The helmet should be the correct size, properly adjusted, and worn on its own (no caps or headphones should be worn underneath).

Use the "2-V-1" Helmet Salute to make sure your helmet is on right and fits you properly.

The 2-V-1 Salute



The edge of the helmet should be two fingers above the eyebrows to protect the forehead.



Use your fingers to check that the helmet straps meet in a V shape just below the ears.



One finger should fit between the chin and the chin strap.

Make sure your helmet doesn't wiggle more than one centimetre in any direction.

The Bike

Bike Fit

Frame: When straddling the top tube of the frame on the bike, both feet should be flat on the ground.



Bikes that are too big for you can be difficult to control and become very dangerous! Bikes that are too small can hurt your knees!

Seat: When sitting on the seat, both feet should be able to touch the ground at the same time (just your toes touching is okay). Make sure your seat is level.



Adjustments: Make sure you know how to adjust your handlebars, seat, and brakes. This will let you reach everything comfortably. It also means the bike can stay comfortable and safe as you grow. If you're leaning too far forward, you can hurt your back and shoulders.

Required for the Ride

- 1 Lights and reflective tape (if riding at night or in the early morning).
- 2 Working bell or horn.



Great to Have

Water



Bright clothes



Basket



Closed-toe shoes



The Best Pre-Ride Checklist for your Bike: The BATCH Test

If you need help with anything on this list, ask an adult!

Brakes

Pull the front brake and push forward on your bike. The back wheel should come off the ground. Do the same for the back brake by pulling it and pushing the bike forward. If the wheels don't lock up, the brakes are not strong enough. When you use your brakes, the pads should only touch the rim of the wheel, not the tire.



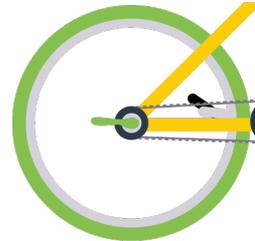
Air

Check to make sure your tires have enough air. If they're flat, pump them up!



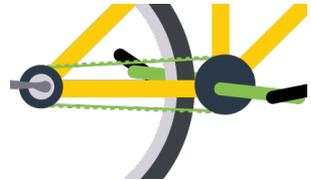
Tires

Check that the tread on your tires isn't too worn out. Spin your wheels to make sure that nothing is rubbing, so they spin freely. Make sure to replace any bent or broken spokes before you ride.



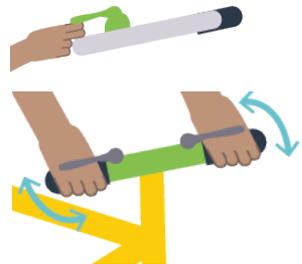
Chain and Crank

Check to make sure that the pedals spin backwards. The chain should be on and lubricated, and no gears should be bent.



Handlebars

Brake levers should be at least two fingers' width from the handlebar when pulled. The handlebars should also be firmly attached. To test this, hold the front wheel between your legs. Then, pull and twist the bars to make sure.



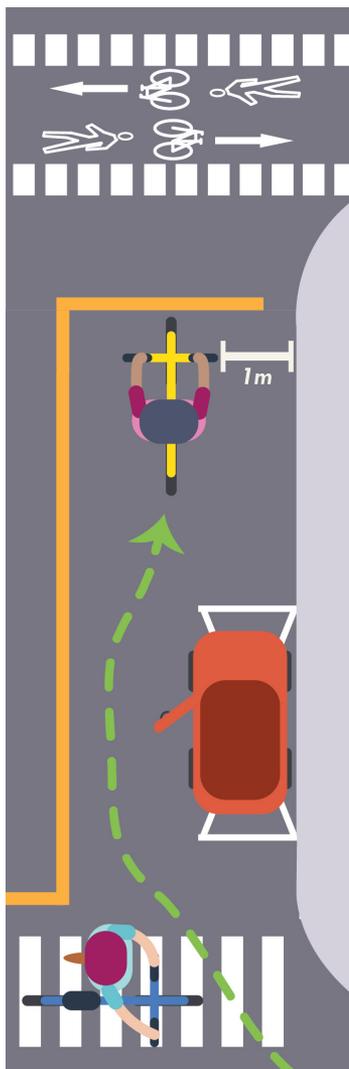
Biking on Roads

Children under 10-years old should generally not ride in traffic.

When you cycle on the road, you need to follow the same rules of the road as drivers. There are also a few more rules for cyclists.

Road Tips

- Crossrides (shown using unique pavement markings) are dedicated parts of the road. They provide a safe path for cyclists to ride through an intersection.
- Ride in a straight line on the right-hand side of the road. Do not weave in between parked cars or ride against car traffic.
- Ride one metre from the curb or from parked cars.
- Remember, cars must leave at least one metre of space when passing you - it's the law!
- Be careful around parked cars, as doors may open suddenly. Leave enough room between you and the cars, as if the doors were all open.
- Walk your bike if using pedestrian crossings or going over railway crossings.

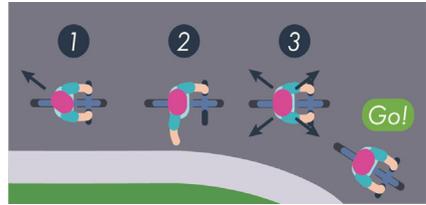


Right Turns

Turning Right

1. Check over your shoulder.
2. Signal that you are turning right.
3. Do one last look around.
4. Go if traffic is clear. Never try to pass cars while making a right turn.

Always check for cars and practise your turns on calm streets where an adult can see you.



Left Turns

Pedestrian Crosswalk

1. Use the right arm signal, and slow down.
2. Dismount and walk with your bike across the pedestrian crosswalk.

Using the Road

1. Check over your shoulder.
 2. Signal.
 3. Shoulder check again.
 4. Take the lane, signal and shoulder check again.
 5. Turn when it's safe.
- Always walk your bike across multiple lanes if the traffic is heavy.
 - Start practising on single-lane roadways first.

Be visible, avoid distraction, and use your signals.



Know Your Road Signs



Stop sign
Come to a complete stop.
Go when it is safe.



Bicycle route
A shared road, marked as a bicycle route.



Sharrows
Indicates the line of travel for cyclists on roads.



Road narrows
Check in front and behind you.
Signal before moving over.



Yield
Let other traffic go first.
Be prepared to stop.



One way
Only ride in the direction of the arrow.

Biking on Trails

Trail Tips

- Make sure the trail is open before riding.
- Let a parent or guardian know where you're riding.
- Bring water, food and tools if you're going for a long ride.
- Yield to walkers, hikers, and horse riders.
- Ring your bell, or call out, before passing others.
- Do not harm any plants or animals.



Skills to Master

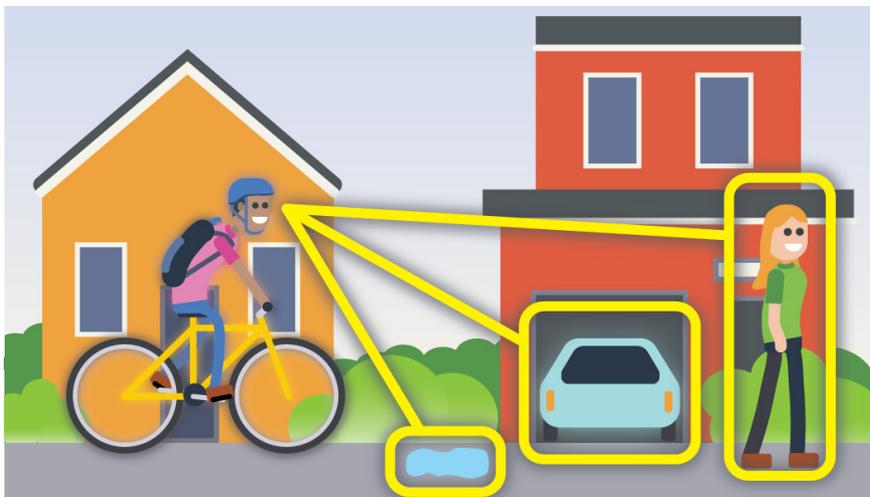
Looking Ahead

Sidewalks, Trails and

Multi-use Paths: Be careful near walkers. Share the space, and let people who are walking go first. You should also use your bell or horn to let them know you're coming!

Driveways: Look all ways before crossing. Check for cars turning in or backing out.

Surface Hazards: Put enough space between you and the curb to avoid puddles, debris and potholes. Ride in a straight line.



Signals

Signal all turns and stops. Practise in an area without traffic. Make sure you can keep your balance while signalling.



Stop



Left



Right #1



Right #2

Getting ON the Bus

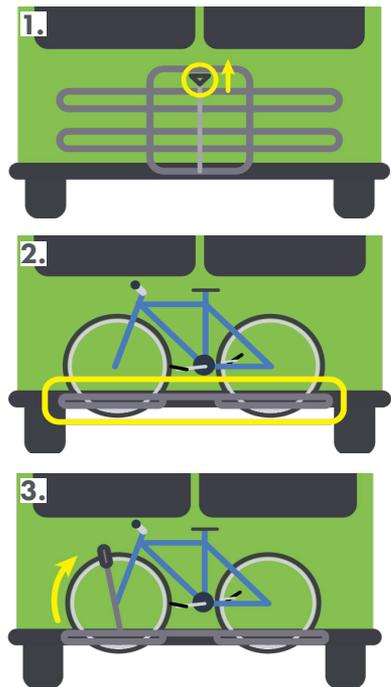
Before the bus arrives: Remove loose items from your bike, such as water bottles or items in your basket.

When the bus arrives: Make eye contact with the driver. Signal to them that you are going to be using the bike rack.

1. Open the rack: At the front of the bus, lift up the handle near the top of the bike rack and lower it.

2. Put bike on rack: If there is no other bike, place your bike on the slot closest to the bus.

3. Move the arm: Lift the support arm up and over the front tire.



Getting OFF the Bus

Sit near the front of the bus and keep an eye on your bike!

Let the driver know that you will be taking your bike. This is to make sure the driver waits for you before leaving.

Removing your bike: Lift up the arm. Place it down on the rack. Take your bike off the rack, and lift up the rack back onto the bus (if no other bike is on the rack). Step out of the way of the bus. Then, go for a ride!

Going to School

On the Way

- Obey crossing guards! They are there to help you cross the road and keep people safe.
- One of the busiest times of the day is the morning. Drivers may be tired or in a rush, so use extra care when watching for oncoming vehicles.
- Find a buddy to ride with you to school. Groups are more visible to cars. Your buddy can help you watch out for hazards.



Create a Routine

- Map out your route! Sit down with an adult or guardian to decide the route to school. Think about where you will park your bike.
- Practise this route and time yourself. This will let you know what time to leave in the morning.
- Try to have a backup route just in case.



Locking Up

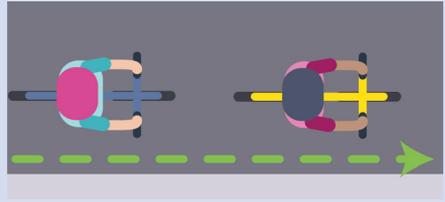
It is very important to lock up your bike on a rack. This helps to make sure it will still be there when you go back. U-style locks are the best because they are the strongest. When locking up, make sure to:

1. Lock your frame and front wheel to the rack with a U-style lock.
2. Use a second U-style or cable lock to secure the rear wheel and frame, if it is practical to carry an extra one.



Single File

Riding Together: When riding with others, ride single file. You can practise this on pavement away from traffic.



Don't ride too close to the person in front of you. You could bump into them! Leave about one bike length of space between you and the person ahead.

What Else?

Shoulder Checks: Look over your shoulder for traffic, and make sure you don't lose your balance when you do. Practise looking over each shoulder for one full second while riding.

Stopping and Starting: Practise starting quickly and stopping safely. When starting, use your gears and your stronger foot on the pedal at the top to start off quickly.

Using Gears: If your bike has gears, learn how to change through them. Some are better for climbing hills or starting quickly. Others are better for movement. Use them to make pedalling easy. You don't want to get tired too fast!





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Enjoy Cycling in Durham Region!

More Resources

Cycle Durham

Visit durham.ca/cycledurham to find out more information on cycling in your area.

Durham Trails

Visit durhamtrails.ca to learn more about the Regional trail system.

Safe Cycling

safecycling.ca
canbike.net
ontariocycling.ca
parachutecanada.org

Helmets

thinkfirst.ca
safekidscanada.ca
healthyontario.com

Users of the Youth Cycling Guide bear full responsibility for their own safety.

The Youth Cycling Guide has been developed to provide tips to parents and older youth as a resource on recreational cycling. The Regional Municipality of Durham makes no warranties of any kind concerning the accuracy, reliability or completeness of the Youth Cycling Guide or the safe condition of any road, route, trail or facility whatsoever listed thereon or on the websites included in the Youth Cycling Guide. Users of the Youth Cycling Guide are solely responsible for the risks associated with this Guide's use, as well as their own safety when using the Guide. Cyclists are reminded that they must comply with the Highway Traffic Act and are strongly recommended to always use safety equipment when cycling.

