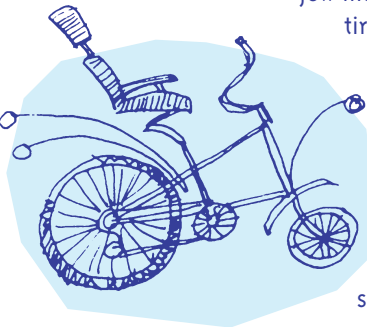


CHOOSING A BICYCLE AND ACCESSORIES

WHAT KIND OF BIKE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

If you think you might want to try some off-road cycling, or you tend to ride on rough roads, you will definitely want a mountain bike. Mountain bikes can accommodate fatter tires, which are more stable and get fewer flats. Mountain bikes are also fine for city riding, with a few modifications (city "slick" tires, racks, etc.).



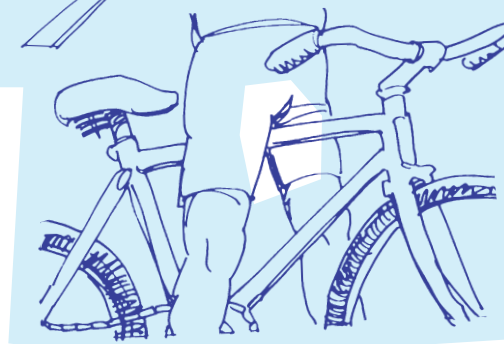
If you prefer a lighter bike or want to ride long distances, you may want a roadbike or hybrid.

The most important thing is to choose a bike which feels comfortable and is the right size for you.



Check your "reach"
With your elbow touching your saddle, you should be able to touch the stem bolt (on a mountain bike).

Frame size
"Crotch clearance" should be 2.5–5 cm for road bikes, 5–8 cm for mountain bikes.



ABSOLUTE NECESSITIES

Helmet: legally required and a fine idea. 80% of bicycle accident injuries are head injuries. Get one with a visor to keep rain and sun out of your eyes. Most importantly, make sure it fits and that it's positioned properly on your head. Ask a pro to help you fit it properly.

Helmet Position



Right.



Wrong.



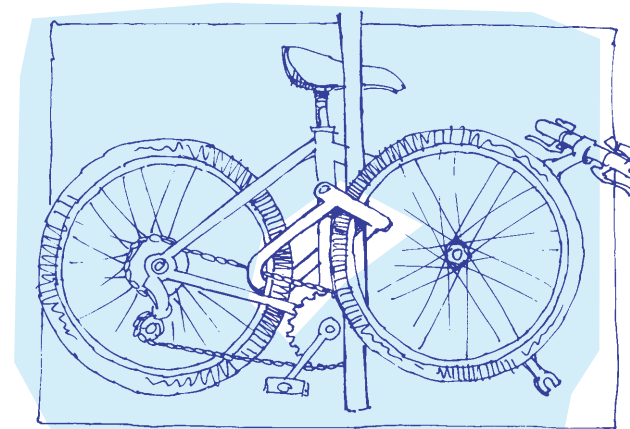
Wrong again.

Lights: legally required. A flashing red light at the rear is visible for at least 300m, and a white front light with a xenon or halogen bulb will be visible to cars in front.

Reflectors: the more the better. Have a red one on the rear, and mount others in the spokes and pedals for side visibility.

Bell or Horn: legally required. There are many options, from a polite mini ding bell to warn pedestrians and cyclists, to a compressed-air horn to penetrate sealed cars.

Lock: U-locks with the key in the middle of the barrel are strongest. Lock your frame and both wheels to something immovable (beware of those poles with a bolt at the bottom!) and publically visible, or within a secure parking area (bike room or cage).



Lock it up!
Whenever possible, lock your bike frame and both wheels to a secure pole, parking meter, bike rack, or immovable object.

STUFF TO LOOK FOR IN A CITY BIKE

- aluminum wheels: light and quick-stopping
- cantilever brakes: good braking power
- three front chainrings (crankset): climb that hill!
- bolt-on rear derailleur: better shifting
- high-quality tires: better road grip
- comfy seat: happy butt



WHAT'S WITH ALL THOSE GEARS?

Gears are there to make riding easier, not harder. Unless you only ride very short distances on very flat terrain, multiple gears are preferable. Switching gears on a bike can be a bit confusing at first if you're not used to it. Briefly, low gears (for climbing) are the ones closest to the frame; high gears are farther from the frame. Ask a friend or bike guru to explain gear use to you, and with a bit of practice you'll be switching gears instinctively and effortlessly.

IS THIS BIKE THE RIGHT SIZE?

- when you stand over the bike the crossbar should be 2.5–5 cm below your crotch for road bikes, 5–8 cm for mountain bikes
- with your elbow touching the front point of your saddle, your fingers should extend to the stem bolt on a mountain bike, or to the middle of the stem on a road bike
- when you are seated and the ball of your foot placed on a pedal at its lowest point your leg should be slightly bent
- within a certain range, you can adjust the fit of your bike by changing the height and angle of the seat, stem, and handlebar. If these adjustments don't make your bike more comfortable, then consider changing the parts.

CAUTION: Do not lock your bike to a street sign pole with a bolt at its base! A thief can nab your bike by simply undoing the bolt and pulling the pole out of its socket.

SOME VERY FINE ACCESSORIES

Rack and panniers (saddle bags): far more pleasant than carrying a sweaty knapsack. Get a sturdy, stable rack, and panniers large enough to carry a couple of bags of groceries.

Fenders: keep the muck off your body and preserve your bike with full-coverage fenders.

Clothing: loose or stretchy clothes are the most comfortable, and light layers are best for warmth and changeable weather. For wet days a waterproof jacket with pit-zips, waterproof pants, riding gloves, and boot covers will keep you dry and content. Be sure your outer layer is bright-coloured and has reflective material attached.

Water Bottle and Cage: stay hydrated and avoid muscle stiffness and exhaustion.

Repair Tools: a light-weight basic tool kit can consist of a multi-tool (or hex keys and screwdriver), hub nut wrench (if you don't have quick-release hubs), pump, spare tube, and patch-kit.

Adornments: personalize your bike with accessories, streamers, toys, or a funky paint job. A One Less Car sticker, although optional, is always in style. Or, if you prefer, keep your bike pristine and beautiful. Bond with your bike and you'll never look back.

YOU AND YOUR BIKE GURU

Find a bike shop or mechanic you trust. Don't hesitate to ask for practical help or spiritual advice on matters from fitting your bike, to explaining your gearing, to exploring the higher realities of ball bearings. Remember that wherever you ride, there you are.



city cycling
essentials

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B.E.S.T. is a non-profit, community-based organization working to promote sustainable alternatives to the private automobile.

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Other City Cycling Essentials to check out:

- **How to Coddle and Care for Your Bicycle**
- **Tips & Tricks for Safe & Happy Cycling**



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CHOOSING A BICYCLE & ACCESSORIES

Welcome to the two-wheeled world!

City cycling is smart, sexy, and fun. You can save money, get fit, and get where you want to go quickly and comfortably.

But selecting a bike is like choosing a dog. Your bike can be your treasured companion, or it can wind up whimpering in the basement. Put a little thought into choosing a bicycle and your bike will be your buddy for life.

