

Why should I ride a bike?

Whatever your age cycling is one of the best forms of physical exercise. It gets you out of the house, lets you enjoy the environment and provides many ways to socialise such as riding with friends and family. Other health benefits offered by regular physical activity like cycling include:

- Reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type II diabetes and some cancers.
- Building and maintaining healthy bones, muscles and joints and reducing the risk of injuries from falls.
- Maintaining or improving physical function and independent living.
- Improving social interaction and quality of life, and reducing depression.

Transport

Cycling is a great form of transport for short trips. Cycling can:

- Save time - you can get where you need to be and exercise at the same time.
- Save money - looking after your bike is less expensive than owning and running a car.
- Increase accessibility - you can combine cycling with public transport for longer distance travel.

Environment

Cycling is also beneficial for the whole community. Switching from driving to cycling will reduce your carbon footprint, and cycling creates less air and noise pollution than other forms of transport.

With the NSW Government and local councils working together to improve cycling facilities there is no better time to get started and enjoy the rewards cycling has to offer.

Resources:

Visit www.bicycleinfo.nsw.gov.au for all your NSW bike-riding information needs in one convenient location.



Here is a list of RTA publications on cycling:

- A handbook for bicycle riders.
- A guide to safe cycling.
- Share and be aware: Travelling together safely.
- Cycling to work: Information for employers and employees.
- RTA cycleway maps.
- Information for parents and carers about safety on wheels.
- Riding in groups.
- Bicycle maintenance poster.
- 'Powered by people not petrol' postcard and poster.

Visit myResources at myRTA.com to order printed copies of these resources.

This brochure is printed on Australian made, recycled and greenhouse friendly paper.

Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales

The information in this brochure is intended as a guide only and is subject to change at any time without notice. It does not replace the relevant legislation.

For further enquiries
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Getting started

It is always wise to start slowly and gradually increase your riding time. Find someone you know to teach you to ride a bike, or ask regular cyclists for advice. Remember, practice will improve your skills and build your confidence.

Finding a 'bike buddy' is also a good idea because riding with others makes cycling more fun, helps you gain more confidence and keeps you motivated to continue.

Getting a bicycle

Your local bicycle shop can help you select the right bicycle and equipment to suit your needs and comfort. Some of the things you will need include:

- An approved bicycle helmet.
- A warning device such as a bell or horn so you can alert pedestrians and other bicycle riders if needed.
- Bicycle pump and puncture repair kit.
- Look at how many gears the bicycle has. More gears make it easier to manage hills.

What do I wear?

When cycling you should always wear:

- An approved bicycle helmet that is securely fitted and fastened.
- Bright or white top to increase your visibility.
- Enclosed shoes to protect your feet.
- Comfortable shorts. Shorts with chamois inserts offer extra comfort.
- Sunscreen and lip balm to protect your skin.
- Sunglasses are good for glare and insect protection.

www.bicycleinfo.nsw.gov.au

Where can I ride?

It is best to start on an off-road shared path where you will find flat and smooth surfaces with plenty of open spaces. If you are in Sydney, Sydney Olympic Park is a great place to start with over 35 km of shared paths and trails.

To find an off-road path closer to you visit www.bicycleinfo.nsw.gov.au or your local council website for maps that show these locations.

Will I be fit enough?

Cycling is low impact, making it an easy form of exercise no matter what your fitness level. As a general rule, if you can walk briskly for 10 minutes, you can cycle for 20 minutes.

Cycling does not have to be strenuous as you can ride at your own pace. If you are not confident riding a bicycle, three wheeled tricycles for easier balance are available. If you are concerned about your fitness see a doctor before you get started.



Using off-road paths

There are a few rules you should know about using off-road paths:

- Off-road paths will be marked by a shared path or bicycle sign.
- Keep to the left.
- Always give way to pedestrians.
- Pay particular attention to the elderly, children and dogs as they can be unpredictable.
- You can ride on the footpath if you are under 12 years of age or if you are over 18 and supervising a child/children under 12 years old.
- If you want to cross the road use a marked crossing when available. If there are no bicycle crossing lights, you must dismount from your bicycle and walk.



Where to next?

Off-road paths are an ideal place to start your cycling and build your confidence. As your next step you may like to start cycling on back streets and quiet roads.

For more information on building your skills see the RTA brochure *Developing your cycling skills*.

See over for information on this and other resources.

