

# BEGINNERS' CHECKLIST

## SIMPLE BIKE CHECK

- Brakes- adjustment; not rubbing against sidewalls/wheel
- Cables (visual)
- Bounce check-quickly reveals many problems-investigate any rattles
- Tires pumped to correct pressures
- Quick visual tire check-for cuts, etc.
- Check for glass on/in tire
- Quick release-correct tightening
- Lube chain
- Check shifting/derailleurs

## ELEMENTARY BIKE HANDLING

- Relax your hands and body. Avoid “death grip”.
- Arms bent.
- Power comes from thighs and glutes
  - Avoid upper body gyrations.
  - Trunk braces the legs.
- Steering: largely with your weight. The bike naturally goes straight when your weight is centered. (That’s why riding no hands works). Internalize this...it may save you a spill!
- Constantly scan the road surface for hazards: potholes, debris, and glass.
- Looking back: Chin touches left shoulder (L.A.B. method).
- How to brake:
  - Evenly, but front does the work. (Demonstrate front vs. rear, walking the bicycle)
  - For hard braking: weight back.
- Control your speed on downhill. Feathering and pumping brakes.

## RIDING MULTIUSER PATHS

- Be courteous of peds, etc.
- Watch out for dogs, kids, baby-strollers, roller skaters, etc.
- Pass on the left; call out.
- Single up if the path is busy.
- Some have posted speed limits, e.g. 15 mpg.
- If stopping, pull off the path.
- Less challenging and less exercise than open road.

## RIDING IN TRAFFIC

- Lots of novice bikers are afraid of riding in traffic. They shouldn’t be. They simply haven’t been educated.
- **Share the road.** This means:
  - Bikes and cars share the roads, the same travel lanes.
  - Same roads, same laws.
  - Cooperate with drivers and they should cooperate with you.
- **Vehicular biking:** Think like a vehicle; act like a vehicle. You’ll be treated like a vehicle.
- Be just as alert to traffic and obstacles as if you’re a car driver.
- Where to ride on the road? **Lane positioning:** done by speed:

# BEGINNERS' CHECKLIST

- To the right;
- **Not** so far right you're in the debris zone;
- **Not** in the shoulder, unless it's very good quality.
- **Not** on the sidewalk, unless under 18 (depends on municipality).
- **Not** in right turn lanes when you are going straight.
- Be predictable. Don't weave. Act the way you'd want a car driver to act.
- Always observe lane markings, traffic lights, etc. Always ride with traffic.
- **Intersections** (done by destination): Always take the right-most lane that goes where you want.
  - Turning left: Use the left lane (or rightmost left-turn lane, if several).
  - Going straight through an intersection do not use turning lane, stay to the right of the lane going straight.
  - **Never** call out "clear".
- **Take the lane:**
  - Always, when stopped in an intersection.
  - Whenever the lane is too narrow for safe sharing.
  - When safety otherwise dictates- e.g. moving same speed as auto traffic
- Summary: **"Bicyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles."**
  - Drive defensively, bike defensively.
  - Common sense and common courtesy.

## RIDING IN A GROUP

- Ride a straight lane. Again, be predictable.
- When in traffic: ride single file, except when the group takes the lane (e.g. to turn left)
- Be alert to other bikers, ahead *and behind*.
- Bad things to do:
  - Quickly stop in front of someone.
  - Veer into someone's path.
- Don't follow too closely- but assume someone is following you too closely.
- Don't pass on right-except if very safe and necessary- rotating off the front of the line.
- Calling out:
  - "Car back!" (single-up for cars to pass)
  - "Car up!" (narrow roads only)
  - "Slowing!" "Glass!" "Stopping!" "Gravel!" "Hole!"
- Hand signals
  - Left. Right. Slowing. Stopping.
  - Point out hazards.

## WHAT TO TAKE ON RIDE

- Helmet
- Water (hotter days and longer rides require more bottles)
- Spare tube
- Pump or CO<sub>2</sub> kit
- May need food on long rides: power bars or gels
- Small, compact bike tool kit