

Getting the most out of bicycling

*A guide for starting a new season
or a plan to help beginners to get in shape quickly*

Starting Out:

Goal 1: Ride at an easy pace as long or as far as you feel comfortable.

Goal 2: Increase your mileage by 10 percent each week, riding at an easy pace.

Goal 3: Begin increasing your speed until you can ride 3 miles in 18 minutes.

Goal 4: Alternately increase your mileage, then your speed. Schedule one or two speed days a week. On those days, do three minute intervals. Alternate three minute periods of fast pace riding with slow (recovery) periods.

Ultimate Goal: To ride 15 miles in an hour, three or four times a week.

Comments:

Always wear a helmet. Unless you're planning to race or do a lot of touring, consider an all-terrain or off road bike with hybrid tires and upright handlebars. They're comfortable and easy to handle.

Pros: It's easy to break into cycling. You can usually ride a fair distance the first day out and build to a faster pace later. Cycling is great if you want to lose weight. It's easy on your joints and burns lots of calories at the faster speeds. It's a great aerobic workout.

Cons: You need to go fast. If you want to continue getting fitness benefits, you must ride at least 15 mph on flat terrain. In hilly areas, 8 to 10 mph is enough. Things you'll need to participate. There's the bike, helmet, accessories, clothing, shoes and repairs. But these purchases can motivate you to keep at it so you protect your investment.

Staying motivated: Combat time shortages. Can you commute to work? Can you ride before work or on your lunch hour? Can you take an evening ride in a well lit park nearby? If it's hard to ride on weekends because the family isn't joining in, plan a long ride on Saturday morning, meeting your family at a picnic site.

Dress like a cyclist. Biking clothes look great, and you'll feel more like you're part of the sport. Get the sleek shorts with chamois lining to prevent chafing; invest in a state-of-the-art helmet (the newer ones are lighter). Wear cycling gloves, which protect your hands in a fall. Buy a cycling computer. It fits on your bike, and you can keep track of your distance and time.

Keep a log: You'll be pleasantly surprised when you tally up your miles at the end of the month and year's end. Save them for comparison from year to year.

Join the Westerville Bicycle Club. There's nothing better than socializing with others who enjoy cycling. Participate in our various club rides with something for everyone from the raw beginner to aspiring racers. Monthly meetings are held, and a newsletter with ride schedules, upcoming events, and patch rides make it easy for you to plan your rides.

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