
All-Season Bike Commuting*

Tips to ensure comfort and safety while doing so



**Even once per week is an awesome start!*

Dressing for all-weather commuting

- Dress appropriately. Use layers, stay dry, avoid cotton!
- Wear gloves. They absorb vibration as well as protect hands in the event of a spill.
- Wear cycling shorts to reduce saddle discomfort.

Bike commute safety tips

- Use proper lighting and reflectivity at night and plenty of it! It is good practice to use two lights front and two lights rear in the event of failure/low batteries. Use reflective materials wherever possible. Often, well-lit/reflectorized cyclists are more visible at night than unlit during the day-time.
- Practice using your front brake, know your stopping distance! Actually, use both brakes simultaneously. The front brake yields 70-100% of stopping power. Push your weight rearward proportional to how hard you apply the front brake. Using the rear brake only can be hazardous.
- Consider a mirror. Look for overtaking cars with turn signals on. Sure you can hear the cars, but with a mirror you have COMPLETE information, i.e. speed, margin, turn signals, how many cars etc!
- Research your route. The best auto route is often not ideal for bikes. Often you can find a better parallel route.
- Understand/identify road hazards: potholes, wet leaves/grates/manhole covers, railroad/light rail tracks, dangerous intersections, wet wood, road debris, overtaking drivers turning right.

Choosing the right commuter bike & accessories

- Select the right type of bike for the intended use and likely distance to be ridden.
Comfort bikes : casual/5-10 miles. Hybrid bikes: moderate/10-50 miles. Road bikes: active/15-100 miles. (these are rough guidelines)
- Make sure the bike is the correct size, and fits properly. Size and fit are far more important than weight or cost. Have a Bike Gallery Pro help you find the right size bike and perhaps treat yourself to a professional fitting... you deserve it and it's guaranteed to improve comfort and efficiency.
- Accessorize. Computers, locks, kickstands, hydration, flat repair goods, bells, fenders, racks, bags, flat protection products, comfortable saddles, the list is endless!
- Determine before purchase if fenders will fit easily. Some road bikes do not accept full coverage fenders.
- Wear a new (less than 4 years old) Helmet. They fit better, are lighter and will not have possible hidden damage or brittle plastics.
- Consider clipless pedals and shoes to improve efficiency.

Commuter bike maintenance

- Lube your chain. Add lube when the “rollers” in the chain look shiny or rusty.
- Minimize washing your bike with water and avoid using a pressure hose. The submersion that hoses deliver can kill crucial bearings and cables. Instead, use furniture polish and cotton cloths.
- Inflate your tires. Underinflated tires are more prone to flats and cause you to work much harder than needed.
- Learn to repair flat tires on the road. Attend one of our fun free flat repair clinics.
- To increase your bike’s longevity, consider having your bike overhauled once a year.

Rules of the road

- Obey the rules of the road. If there is one thing to remember, follow the same rules as when you are driving a vehicle.
- Ride with traffic. Signal your intentions.
- Ride on the traveled portion of the road, in a straight line, do not run red lights, ride predictably... earn your right to the road.

Handy web sites for bike commuters

- **Bike Gallery** - www.bikegallery.com
- **Portland Department of Transportation (PDOT)** - www.gettingaroundportland.org - go to transportation options click on bicycles – a wealth of useful information and links.
- **Online Cyclometer** - www.gmap-pedometer.com - a fun tool for planning and measuring routes.
- **www.bikeportland.org** - Portland’s premier bike blog with local news and information of all types.
- **Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)** <http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/bikewalk>
- **Oregon Vehicle Code** – read all 44 pages on http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/bikewalk/plan_app/statutes.htm#prov_pub
- **TriMet** - www.trimet.org - online pamphlets and rider information.
- **Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA)** - www.bta4bikes.org - education, advocacy, and organizers of the annual Bike Commute Challenge
- **Legal information** - <http://www.stc-law.com/bikepower.html> - by Swanson Thomas and Coon attorneys.

Thanks and happy cycling,

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