

TOP TIPS FOR CYCLING TO WORK!

"Now I understand why cycling just to get around is becoming so popular."

"I wish someone had told me how much fun cycling is, I would have taken it up so"

FREE HEALTH!

- Young or old, athletic or sedentary, cycling is brilliant for your body – a simple, healthy and pleasurable way to travel!
- Let your heart and circulatory system have a gentle workout whilst cycling to or from work – you burn more than 500 calories per hour, saving time and money: your very own FREE Urban Gym available anywhere, anytime

SAFETY FIRST

- **TAKE TIME, NOT RISKS:** give yourself time. If you're not rushing, you're more tolerant of other road users and less likely to take risks (such as racing amber lights or through junctions). Give yourself the time to be fully aware of what's ahead.
- **SIGNAL ASSERTIVELY & CLEARLY:** don't leave motorists in any doubt what you want to do – don't be bashful, use clear outward arm-movements!
- **DON'T ASSUME A DRIVER HAS SEEN YOU** –making eye contact with drivers also helps them know your intention. If turning, check over your shoulder in good time.
- **BE BRIGHT: USE LIGHTS!** Having a white front light and a rear red light is a legal requirement as well as just common sense. Wear clothing that gets you seen too – brightly coloured, reflective clothing is great for darker days and evenings.
- **WATCH FOR LEFT TURNING VEHICLES!** *Never* cycle on the inside of a moving or temporarily stationary vehicle or HGV as you approach a junction – vehicles don't always use their indicators and they might intend on turning left. And remember that on tight turns HGVs often swing right before turning left.
- **STAY OUT OF DRIVERS' BLIND SPOTS** - as a general rule, the larger the vehicle, the larger the blind spot.
- **EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED** –
 - **LUAS tracks can be slippery in all weathers** - if crossing, do so cautiously at a 90 degree angle only;
 - stay out of parked cars 'door zones';
 - keep an eye out for sudden lane changes; and
 - be aware of other potential hazards e.g. potholes, other slippery surfaces (e.g. wet or icy roads/road markings, wet leaves, other debris etc.)



- **GIVE YOURSELF SPACE –**
 - Avoid cycling too close to the curb and give yourself enough room to manoeuvre;
 - Don't tailgate and avoid boxing yourself in between lanes of traffic;
 - On narrow or hilly roads, stay visible and avoid getting squeezed too far to the side - if needed, as long as you can be seen, go in lane with the traffic, whilst being mindful of safe opportunities for a car to pass.
- **TREAT A BIKE LANE LIKE ANY OTHER LANE**– continue to be aware of traffic and other road users, potholes and debris.
- **RESPECT OTHER CYCLISTS' SPACE** - if overtaking, pass on their right; any space that may be available to the left is their evasion space.
- **TUNE IN TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS, NOT YOUR IPOD:** leave headphones at home.
- **DON'T CARRY BAGS ON HANDLEBARS** – use a basket, a back-carrier, a pannier or a rucksack
- **BRAKE CORRECTLY** - Check your brakes regularly. To make a sudden stop, *press both brakes together* and slide to the back of the saddle. Never press your front brake first. In wet weather or on steep hills, try “feather braking” by applying intermittent pressure.
- **KNOW THE STREET SIGNS:** more information can be found in the Rules of the Road www.rulesoftheroad.ie and National Transport Authority's Cycle Manual www.cyclemanual.ie.
- For More safety tips, see RSA Cycle Safety Booklet, 2013 www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Pedestrians-and-Cyclists/Cycling-safety/



STAY SECURE!

- Invest in a quality lock: check it satisfies a '**Sold Secure**' Gold or Silver standard.
- Lock your frame and back wheel to a parking stand and use a cable or second lock to secure your front wheel.
- Keep a record of your bike's serial number, and take a photo of it
- To avoid purchasing a stolen bike, ask for a receipt.



YOUR BIKE

- Check your bike's road worthiness, e.g.
 - Your brakes, do they work well, back and front.
 - Tyres, check for wear and tear – they are your contact with the road, they should be good condition. Good tyres enhance your cycling enjoyment.
 - Check the condition of both brake and gear cables
 - If unsure, or don't have the tools, take your bike to your local friendly bike shop.
- **If buying a new bike** - take time to find a bike that's right for you e.g. modern hybrids can make urban riding easier and offer more options, whilst road bikes are great for longer distances and hills.
- To find the right frame size for your body, straddle the bike and stand flat-footed – two inches of clearance from the top tube is recommended. For a ladies' bike, imagine a line running vertically from where the top tube joins the handle bar. If unsure, check with the experts in the shop.

- Does your employer offer the **Cycle to Work Tax Saver Scheme**? It can save you up to 52% on a new bike and safety equipment worth up to €1,000 (average savings range from 29-49%.) See www.taxesaver.ie

COMFORT AND EFFICIENCY

- Cycling is most efficient if the saddle is positioned so that your knee is only slightly bent at the bottom of each rotation.
- Softer seats can ease friction and are easy to install. Women have wider sit bones, so need wider seats.
- Gears: please your knees! Avoid pedalling in high gear for long periods; instead, shift to lower gears for faster, gentler revolutions....and get more exercise!
- It's a good idea to have a spare tube, tyre leavers and pump to hand (of course it might also be handy to know how to use them)!

WEAR YOUR HELMET CORRECTLY!

- All helmets must comply with basic safety standards (ie a "CE" mark and EN 1078) to meet European Safety Standards
- Get the correct size and fit: check it doesn't obscure vision in any way. Straps should be close fitting, forming a V shape around the ear (see illustration), but not too tight e.g. no more than two fingers between the strap and your chin
- Wear it low on your forehead - 2 finger widths above your eyebrows. Sit it evenly between your ears and flat on your head. Tighten the chin strap so it feels secure and doesn't move up and down or from side to side.
- If your helmet has been impacted, or shows sign of wear and tear, replace it. The integrity of the foam part is essential for absorbing a crash impact



PLAN YOUR ROUTE

- If you're unfamiliar with your route, consider a practice run at a time when traffic is light. Alternatively, you could walk your route (or part of it) to familiarise yourself with cycle facilities, junction layouts, signal sequences en route. Most things in life are better with rehearsals!
- If you live in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick or Waterford, the Cycle Planner might be handy- www.journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie/cp - it provides cycle route options, and can be customised to individual cycling capabilities.
- If you live outside of these cities, other online options such as www.google.ie/maps can help you see what your route might look like

GETTING STARTED

- If you're out of shape, **start slowly** e.g. you could pedal just 30 minutes or so a day on flat terrain for the first three or four weeks; and gradually increase intensity thereafter, adding hills for a better workout.

- **Dress for comfort and Irish weather!** Light waterproofs weigh you down. You might also consider cycle shorts/leggings which can reduce skin irritation caused by fabric 'bunching up'. For extra comfort, you could also choose extra padding.
- Some people experience initial discomfort with chaffing (for example around the inner thighs). To stop that, just place a surface covering of **Vaseline to avoid any friction**
- Consider '**buddy**' cycling– it can be more fun and make the miles feel shorter!

TRAINING FOR EVERYONE

However experienced you might be already, there are always new tips and tricks you can learn.

Why not consider cycle training? Bike for Life is offered by Cycling Ireland. Other options are below. You can also keep a look the new national standard for cycle training in Ireland- '*Cycle Right*'.

You can check your local bike shop or local authority; or search online:

<http://www.cyclingireland.ie/page/programmes/bike-for-life1>

<http://www.cycletrainingireland.com/> or

<https://irishcentreforcycling.ie/cycle-training-for-adults>

