

the
Bike Owner's
Bible



Bikeroo

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Introduction

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iking or cycling is an excellent exercise that works every muscle of your body. Yes, that includes the muscle that makes us tick: the heart. It can also make you feel awesome. Starting is as easy as jumping on your bike but learning a few things first might help you enjoy it more and avoid pain and discomfort during rides.

From setting your saddle height to the importance of hydration and diet for bikers, this book contains (almost) all the information you'll ever need so that you can ride pain-free and focus on the joys of actually being on the bike.

Our goal when writing this book was to provide you with an easy-to-read guide to help you make the most out of your rides. We believe that knowledge can change your biking experience. It can help you get fit, stay healthy, enrich your life and take your rides in a whole new different way. Let's begin!

Welcome to The Bike Owner's Bible.

Bikeroo.

How to improve comfort when riding a bike

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he only pain that you should feel when riding your bike is “the burn”, that intense feeling in the muscles after pushing hard. We love the burn, we want the burn! What we don’t want and certainly don’t love is the feeling of discomfort or even pain that stops us for biking longer.

Setting your saddle height correctly is one way to prevent unwanted pain. There are a few known methods to get the best fit for you, one that strikes a balance between comfort and ability to develop power. Try and see what works for you.

Heel-to-pedal Method

The most common way is the heel method or heel-to-pedal. It involves sitting on the saddle, while holding on a stable chair or table or just by leaning against a wall or ask for somebody to hold the bike for an added support. This is our preferred method because it’s simple and efficient.



Here's how:

- 1 Place your heel on the pedal and pedal backwards reaching 6 o'clock position.
- 1 Make sure that your knee is completely straight, if the knee is still flexed or bent, you might need to increase the saddle height
- 1 Adjust a bit of increments one at a time
- 1 If you feel that your heel can no longer reach the pedal, then it's time to lower your saddle.

LeMond Method

Popularized by Greg LeMond in the early 80's, this method uses flat object such as meter ruler or spirit level placing in between your legs while applying a bit of pressure to the groin. In performing this, the shoes should be removed and ask for somebody to help in getting your "inseam" measurement, from your crotch to the floor. Once you get the result from the measurement, you have to multiply it by 0.883, the answer to this will be your proper saddle height.

Here's an example:

Inseam measurement = 27 inches' x 0.883 = 23.84

Your saddle height will be 23.84 inches

However, this method doesn't always seem appropriate for all and it's a bit more complicated. Other factors should be taken into consideration such as longer legs than torso and poor flexibility of the rider itself.



Crank length

The last method you can try is “the crank length”. This is also very important because it opens up the opportunity for people to change the length of the crank without worrying about the outcome.



Crank length can be used as a parameter to affect other factors of bike fit such as a shorter crank length at which can significantly open up the hips. Another thing to consider is that crank length should reflect your saddle height, especially when switching bikes and setting the saddle height. Generally, most people that have a low saddle height (usually on smaller bikes) need to use a shorter crank length.

However, some may experience discomfort after they bought an assembled bike from a shop due to inappropriate saddle height and usually the cause would be the arm length crank that is already installed and people tend not to change it. You have to be aware if the crank length is not measured accordingly for a biker, they intend to extend their knee just to compensate pedaling and this could lead to a much lesser comfort while riding.

How to Choose a Bike Saddle

The saddle is one of the most - if not THE most - important bike part for your comfort. Bad saddles make bad rides, pain, suffering and unhappiness. Choose well!

To help you choose the best saddle you first need to know there are a lot of different type of saddles out there and each has some advantages and some disadvantages, of course. In the long run, it will be trial and error so we urge you to try as many as you can, hopefully take'em out for some rides before you commit.

These are the most common type of saddles:

- Racing
- Cruiser
- Comfort
- Gender specific

Saddle's effect on the body can be for:

- Muscle development
- Injury prevention
- Blood flow
- Comfort

Different Types of Saddle

Racing Saddles

These are long and narrow built for road riding and racing. Suitable for fast and continuous pedaling. It allows your body for full motion thus prevent chaffing. These racing saddles have been developed over time to protect the man's private parts during long rides.



Comfort Saddles

A padded comfort saddle that is designed for moderate pedaling and longer distance rides. This is the perfect saddle for long distance touring and absorbs shock vibrations from rough roads. These are created for male and females with shorter nose and center is hollow which designed for extra comfort.



Cruiser Saddles

These are wider, padded saddle, suitable for leisure rides while sitting upright on the bike. It provides a lot of comfort due to support on both ends. The handlebar nature on cruiser bikes makes the rider sit upright which means the weight will be directly on the seat. The word cruising means you'll ride on cruise so no need to pedal too quickly. Often used for children bikes.





Men's saddle

Gender
specific



Women's saddle

Everyone's posterior is different, especially so for men and women. The women have wider hips and ischial bones (perch bones) meaning they should look for a much wider saddle to provide more comfort. Men have longer, narrower saddles suitable for road riding as we discussed earlier. However, some men have wider hip structure and they usually prefer a saddle that is designed for women that corresponds to their body preferences. Best advice that we can give you is to test multiple saddles and see which one feel right to you.

Types of saddle cushioning

Gel

It usually molds to your body and provides you great comfort. If you don't ride very much, this type of cushion is very well recommended. The only downside is that the gel saddles can become compacted much easily compared to foam cushion saddles. But if you don't exceed two hours ride this is usually not a problem.

Foam

It provides a flexible feeling that can easily spring back to shape. Road riders often use this kind of saddle as it provides them added support. For longer rides, firmer foams are better to use as they won't compact easily compared to gel cushion.

Some misconceptions about saddle

If you're into biking, one of the most common complaints you'll hear is discomfort from back aches and pains from sensitive areas of a rider's body. It is not the fault of the saddle itself but rather because the saddle isn't suitable in the cyclist's physical structure and not properly adjusted. These are some of the factors and it is important to be well-informed on how to set up your bike accordingly.

Handle bar height

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his doesn't mean that the higher the bars are, the more comfortable it is. As a matter of fact, if the handlebars are too high, most of the body-weight gets shifted back and that usually causes discomfort such as body aches and pains. Much worst, it can lead to a chronic low back pain.

Always consider the distance from the seat to the handlebars. This can be determined through length and angle of the top tube of your bike frame.

Your handlebars should be 4-5 inches wider than your shoulders. Having your saddle/seat little higher can give more stability especially for downhill riders. However, a little lower will give you more climbing or uphill optimal power.



Evaluate your handlebar height by:

- Lean your bike against a wall and place a yardstick on the saddle
- Make sure that the yardstick is level to the seat/saddle and the end of the ruler extends over the bars
- You will notice here how high the handlebars are in relation to the height of the saddle/seat

Having a correct and proper height of the handlebars can result in comfort that balances pressure on the body. Make sure that your arms and neck felt comfortable and relaxed naturally during rides. The height of your handlebars should be based to your comfort and riding preferences.

Warm up and Cool Down for Cyclists/Bikers

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arming up is essential to prepare your body for a ride. Yes, it can be boring and cumbersome but there's a steep price to pay for eschewing this step. We recommend you make it a priority because after all is just 5 minutes that can really make a difference: adequate blood circulation and oxygen to your muscles, less fatigue and less chance of injury!

At the end of a ride, cooling down will help you restore in a pre-exercise state and aid in the recovery by preventing metabolic waste build up that usually inhibits the muscle recovery. It can also prevent post-exercise dizziness and fainting as it transfers oxygen all over the body and not just to the tired muscles. A 10-15 minutes' cooldown easy spin is good enough during post ride and keep in mind that your heart rate should be less than 80 bpm.



Below are some of the best stretches before and after biking:

Leg Swings

Stand with your bike to one side, hold onto the seat for balance. Lift one leg forward and backward, make sure it was straight and extended as you swing your leg from side to side. You should feel the stretch on outer hip and thighs. Repeat with the other leg.

Heel-Toe Walk

Stand up straight, step one foot forward, landing on heel. Stay on heel and lower your torso down over your right leg. Raise your torso back up and transfer the weight onto your right foot while rolling the heel to the ball of the foot. Rise up on the ball of your foot as high as you can. Slowly lower to take step forward with left leg that lands on your heel. Do this for 30 seconds.

Foam Rolling

Sit on foam roller, placing it behind your thighs, particularly on hamstrings area. Balance by lifting your body using your both hands. Then slowly roll over the foam roller. Roll over going to your glutes then back again. Repeat on the other leg.

Chest Stretch

Stand facing on the side of the bike, grab the top tube or saddle and handlebar for wider grip then lean forward at your waist. Hold onto that position before pressing your chest down toward the ground. Repeat for 5 to 10 repetitions.

Butt Kicks

You probably remember these from PT. Jump on alternating feet, fully bend your knee one at a time. Try to get your foot as close as possible towards your butt for maximum stretch. Do this for 60 seconds.

High Knees

Yes, the name of the exercise says it all. Stand in a secure place, jog then lift one leg high as much as you can, with alternating legs. Do this for 60 seconds.

Hydration for Cyclists/Bikers

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ater. Water. Water. We can't say it enough times! Staying hydrated is mandatory if you exercise. Huffing, puffing and sweating is how we lose most water when we are on the bike.

Studies show that even a 2% decrease in the water level in your body makes a tremendous impact to your performance. Lesson is clear: drink A LOT OF WATER!

There are a few good rules that can help you prevent dehydration. For example: mind your timing. To avoid water loss during ride, drink about 16 ounces of water 4 hours before you plan to hop on the bike and then sip another 12 ounces 2 hours before. If you ride in the morning just drink as much water as you feel comfortable when you wake up.



During the ride, drink just enough to match the intensity of your ride, how sunny it is and how much you usually sweat. You know your body the best, adjust accordingly. One way to know if you drank enough water is to jump on the scale before the ride and then again after. If you weigh less, you need to drink more water.

After a ride, you should replace all the lost fluids in your body by drinking plenty of water until you prove a colorless urine.

Best foods for bikers and how to eat

It doesn't mean that if you start biking you can eat whatever you want without getting fat. Most novice cyclist make the mistake of overeating because they feel extra hungry or think "they deserve it". Sure, a good amount of healthy foods will help provide all the nutrients that a biker needs but these still have to come from a healthy, varied diet. It's very difficult to outride a crappy diet, remember this.

Here are some healthy diet and weight loss tips for all the bikers out there:

Eat breakfast before you ride as this will help kick-start your metabolism. Missing a breakfast can lead your body to hold on your fat storage instead of burning them.

Avoid foods that have gluten content. Limiting gluten consumption will naturally decrease how much processed foods you eat. When you ride a bike, you'll feel bloated after consuming this, so avoidance is the key.

Choose more lean protein and vegetables. These will keep you satiated for longer, feed your muscles and are also loaded with essential nutrients you need for a short or long rides.

No to dietary supplements. Those who claim that will help you lose weight will only be good at the start but not in long term condition. Being on activities like biking does not recommend relying on these supplements as it takes away essential nutrients from your body that is needed for good cycling performance.



The ideal time to eat is at least two to three hours before your ride. Consume foods high in GI (glycemic index) such as pasta, brown rice that will give you energy during the ride.. Then make sure to go back to eat low in GI after two to three hours.

Energy drinks are also recommended for cyclists/bikers as they contain glucose for energy fuel and hydration requirement. Bikers need to maintain constant fueling so it's better to hydrate yourself all the time by consuming energy drinks and/or water.

Consume the right amount of calories. Being an active person especially a cyclist needs a little increase in caloric intake. A good estimate is to multiply the distance travelled in miles by 40 or 50 calories. Having a GPS device can also help to estimate the calories you burned. Keep in mind that carbs are your body's fuel and it is the primary source of energy in cycling. A good way to eat carbs is just to support your training. Avoid the effect of large servings and aim to eat fist size portion of slow-burn carbs such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Eat enough proteins as well. It is essential for health, immune support and muscle recovery. It is more filling than usual energy giving food. Include beans along with meat, fish and low fat dairy sources.

Choose good fat and not bad fat. Aim to have at least 20g of healthy oils per day, sources can be avocados, omega 3 fatty acids and nuts. For recovery food, the first 20 minutes' post ride is the optimal refueling period. Take carbs rich drinks or meal to have the best energy refill your body needs. Milk based drink is also a good option.

Common bike injuries and how to avoid them

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he truth is that moving and sport in general can bring some discomfort and pain. It's just part of the game and we can only do our best to prevent it..For cycling, the main type injury is a wound. But strains and pains are also categorized as a result of overtraining and bio-mechanical stress from muscle imbalances or an incorrect bike parts set up, which hopefully are corrected by now thanks to this guide!

Still, it's good to have a general knowledge of the most common pains and injuries, how serious they might be and how to heal.

Achilles Tendonitis

An inflamed Achilles tendon is one of the most common bike injuries due to overuse. It is different from the so called Achilles tendon rupture so never be confused because these are two different injuries. The common root cause is poor bike fit and incorrect placement of pedal cleats.



Try to take some rest from training and to reduce inflammation, put some ice. You can also take ibuprofen for pain relief.

Patellar Tendonitis

Raising your saddles will help you utilize more of your hamstrings and glutes, withholding the pain from your quads and patellar tendon.



Saddle Sores



A saddle sore is skin disorder caused by friction from long hours of riding. Old shorts that are too tight are can cause this. To prevent it, try lowering your saddle for a lesser movement of the pelvis, as this can cause friction against the saddle.

Low Back Pain

Longer hours of riding are major culprits that leads to lower back pain in biking. Usually, an excessive flexion in the lumbar region of the back. In worst case scenario, this can lead to a more serious condition involving nerve impingement. Prevent this by performing core strengthening.



Bike Training Secrets

Even if we only ride recreationally we still want to ride better, faster and more efficient, it's only natural. Here, we've summed up different biking tips and advice that really work and can help you push forward. We hope you'll find this useful and apply it in your day to day riding!

Don't change your training for no good reason

Consume energy drinks during training and practices

Not just during a race, but much more during the training. This drinks can definitely help improve your performance compared to just having water and food. But if you prefer to drink water, it is recommended to have during easy recovery races.

Put on sticky notes

It's odd but it's very useful and effective. Put on sticky notes to your handlebars as this will help you remember essential things while riding. For example, get a piece of sticky note paper, write down reminders such as "don't forget to drink", "use your rear brake", etc.

These are some of the most important details you need to remember. Even putting on smiley :) face notes will remind you that biking is fun – even if it hurts!

Attack when you feel bad

During rides, especially on races, when somebody passes by you, you might feel frustrated. Did you know that this feeling can help boost yourself to increase your speed? It's what we call “adrenaline rush”. This moment can be challenging but also self-rousing. Always remember that being under pressure have some positive effect on you and chances are, you can beat them and went over to finish line faster than a bullet!

Focus on quality of your training

It's far better to focus more on high intensity bike sessions than adding the frequency of your training. You'll get better performance, improved stamina and bike skills. Once you built up these you will naturally have longer sessions. Don't force it but push yourself when it gets too easy.

Riding your bike is good for your health

You need to be physically active in achieving a healthy mind and body. It is one of the best solutions to lose weight and stay healthy, protecting you from different serious diseases such as certain cancer, obesity, heart disease, arthritis, and diabetes. There are different types of activities that you can do to maintain a healthy body, one of which is through biking.



Biking or cycling is an excellent form of cardiovascular activity or an aerobic exercise that allows you to work larger muscles in your body in a sustained activity that increases your heart rate which delivers a diverse health benefits. It is also a good form of non-weight bearing exercise which means it is easier for the knee joints to do their job, making it a better choice for overweight individuals. Regular biking can significantly help you reduce the risks of health problems.

You can ride to work, to school, and even to different challenging places such as hills and roads. There are over 1 billion people around the world ride bicycles for sports, fun activities and transportation means. It's easy to learn how to bike, it doesn't require any high level skills because once you learn it, you will never forget it.

It also builds your stamina, endurance and strength. Don't forget that is fun and it can be done with friends. Different adventures such as riding up and down the hills are more exciting and fun compared to other cardio activities you do indoors. We might be biased but we think riding is just the best activity ever!

Just look at the health benefits listed here:

- Reduced anxiety and depressive mind
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Helps improve posture
- Prevent diseases
- Decreased stress levels
- Decreased body fat levels
- Improved joint mobility
- Become more flexible
- Lower body fat
- Lose weight

You can argue that biking gives you the same benefit that you can get from other aerobic or cardio exercises such as running or swimming and it's true. But it has a few big advantages though: gentler on the joints as it helps to strengthen your bone and preserve cartilage. If you are overweight, running will punish your joints a lot more compared to biking.

You can also bike to work as opposed to running(or swimming...) and as biking is a good stress reliever, it can bring more balance and good energy into your daily life. Sure, some bikes are pricey but the benefits are numerous and in the long run, the extra health pays for itself. The benefits of biking are really endless and the more you get into it, the more you'll notice and be surprised. That's our experience and we really hope it will be yours as well.