

Frequently asked questions by cyclists.

1. Can I ride any bike?

Its fair to say that pretty much any bike available can legally be ridden on the road. With the exception of track bikes which have no brakes. Having said this, not all bikes will ride the same.

Hybrid and road bikes have slim tyres that are designed to roll smoothly on tarmac roads, they have light frames which helps with any climbs. Road bikes are generally fitted with drop handle bars, where as the hybrid bikes tend to have flat bars. Both road bikes and hybrids are quick and fun to ride, making them ideal for the road environment.



Some of the hybrids come with treaded tyres to aid any off road rides. These can be updated if you plan to ride on smooth roads only.

Always test ride a bike before you purchase, ensuring that the bike is the right size for you.

2. How do I eliminate getting lost, deal with breakdowns and dangerous drivers?

These points are always in the back of every riders minds, there are common issues mechanical issues that you should be sure you can fix :

- Make sure you know how to fix a puncture, you can easily practice this at home. Make sure you have the right equipment – spares with you, this includes a spare tube, patches, tyre levers and a pump or co2 cannister.
- Before any ride carry out a safety check on the bike, making sure all the elements of the bike are still working correctly. Use the well known M-check (copy of our M-check is on the website). This will ensure that the bike is safe before you ride.
- A regular service with a good bike mechanic will again ensure the bike is in the best condition. The frequency will depend on how much you ride, your local bike shop can offer help here. They may even have a maintenance / service plan you can take advantage of.

Riding with other riders will give you the details of the roads where you live, many of the local cycle shops carry out rides both off or on the roads. If they aren't friendly then move on to another. They will support you in all the ways you will need if they are any good.



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There are many bike computers available that allow you to program routes for your ride, which will help with not getting lost, a SAT NAV for your bike.

The bike shops or local cycle clubs will offer at various times courses on riding within groups, which will help give you confidence on the road. They will also offer advice on safety on the road. So talk with them to see what is available in your area.

3. Why am I uncomfortable on the bike, is my saddle right?

It's not unusual for people to be put off from riding a bike by the saddle being uncomfortable. This doesn't have to be the case, so before you give up, let's look into all of the possible causes.

It may not be just the saddle that is causing you issues. Body shapes vary and there are plenty of different saddle designs to accommodate these variations. Your local bike shop should be able to advise on options.



Changing the angle of the saddle could help, sometimes adjusting the saddle from pointing down or up changes the feel on the bike enough to remove the discomfort. Perhaps the size or fit of the bike is not correct, so have the fit of the bike checked. This could help with lower back, wrist or knee issues. There are plenty of good professional bike fitters, who should be able to help with these problems. Don't always blame the saddle.

4. Will I need padded shorts?

If you intend to do any longer rides, padded shorts are a good idea, but not essential.

Shorts will have varying density inserts fitted to them, so make sure you select the appropriate one for your anatomy. Coupled with the right saddle they will prevent you from developing any saddle sores.

Do not wear anything under your cycling shorts, purchase shorts that fit, too small and they will cut off blood flow, too large and they will move around on the ride.

Don't wear your shorts any longer than is needed, this will prevent any sweating, which can encourage saddle sores. Always wash your shorts after every ride,

Shorts can be purchased with bibs attached, these tend to be more comfortable on any longer rides, but they are more awkward when it comes to taking a comfort break. It's totally up to you.

Other kit to consider :-

Helmets although not compulsory, are a very good idea. Cycling shirts are designed to wick any sweat away for the rider and if you are unfortunate enough to get wet on your ride, they will dry quickly.



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Gloves at anytime of the year are a good idea to keep you warm in the winter but also help protect your hands if you are unfortunate enough to come off the bike.

5. Should I be clipped in on my ride?

Clipping onto your pedals is more efficient but by no means essential. By clipping in you will use more of the leg muscles and the pedal stroke will be smoother.

By clipping in you will enjoy the ride and be more powerful. There are no fixed standards for the type of clips, so you will need to purchase the right clips for the pedals you have decided to use..



Every type of clip is adjustable to increase the firmness of the clipping. When you start it is advisable to set the pedals to the easier settings, adjusting them to firmer settings once you have become used to them.

When you start, practice clipping in (by pressing down on the pedal) and clipping out (by rotating the foot) on the turbo, then progress onto grass, before using them on the road.