

6 Cycling Mistakes That Everybody Makes



Cycling is a great calorie burner, besides being a relaxing and fulfilling hobby. As with everything, there's a right and wrong way to go about it. Cycling newbies are prone to silly mistakes, which risk injury and make their workout less effective. Even veterans slip up, now and then! Here's 6 common cycling mistakes you're probably making.

1. Not using gears

Those gears aren't there for decoration. Most bikes come with multiple gear options, allowing them to move more efficiently over different inclines. Done correctly, you'll find yourself travelling faster, whilst utilising your power economically. Do it wrong, and you'll make things much harder for yourself. Whilst mastering bike gears can take a bit of practice, we heartily recommend it to get the most from your wheels.

2. Not eating frequently

If you're going on a lengthy bike ride, such as one hour or longer, it's advisable to bring a small snack with you. Cycling is quite activity intensive, meaning you'll need a constant source of energy. For the best results, start eating about 45 minutes into your journey, and then eat small amounts every 20 or so minutes. If you don't, your blood sugar will crash, causing fatigue, dizziness and confusion. For the best cycling foods, think carbs and protein, like energy bars, whole-grains, fruit and nuts.

3. Not positioning the seat correctly

For maximum comfort, it's essential that your bike seat is adjusted to the right height. If it's too low, your leg will under-extend, causing knee pain and impairing your movement. If it's too high, you'll over-extend, which can lead to ankle pain and a loss of stability. To check the height, your knee needs to be slightly bent at the bottom of your stroke.

4. Not checking your reach

When riding a bike, your torso should be bent at a 45 degree angle over the bike, which dictates your reach. If your reach is too long, you'll develop back injuries from constantly over-stretching. If it's too short, your knees will be wedged too close to your body. Although the handlebars can be adjusted, it's best to test drive bikes before you buy them, so you can find one with the perfect reach.

5. Not pacing yourself

After purchasing your new bike, you'll probably be eager to give it a spin. However, be careful not to overdo it. If you're new to biking, it will take some time to build up your muscles and stamina, and being too ambitious can cause fatigue and injury. Start with small, manageable distances, and then move onto longer ones as you become fitter. This also gives you time to get to grips with your bike.

6. Not carrying a repair kit

You wouldn't drive without your spare tyre. The same logic applies to a bike. Emergency repair kits are small and easily portable, saving you from punctures and flat tyres. Most can be clipped to the side of your frame. Unlike changing a car tyre, which can be a bit of a performance, repairing a bike wheel is considerably easier, and can be completed within a few minutes. Just ensure you practice before setting out.