

## **Cycling Information Sheets**

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The following Information Sheets provide information in relation to cycling that may be useful to distribute to your colleagues. Note that the National Transport Authority is not making recommendations or providing guarantees for any supplier or product listed in this document.



## Looking after you

### How much is enough?

Being active for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week is good for our health. For children and youths, at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity activity every day is recommended for good health! Short bouts of at least 10 minutes can be built up during the day. For weight loss 60-75 minutes of moderate intensity activity is recommended per day.<sup>1</sup>

Moderate intensity activity is the equivalent of a brisk walk or any activity that causes a light sweat on your forehead and causes you to be slightly out of breath but still able to hold a conversation!<sup>1</sup>

- \* Cycling is ideal as part of a daily exercise routine and can be part of your daily commute, your trip to the shops or a weekend spin with friends just for fun.
- \* Cycling is a good form of aerobic exercise that is not a strain on the body, which in turn, increases stamina and decreases tiredness and fatigue.
- \* Car drivers are exposed to 5 times as much polluted air than bikers, making cycling good for both the environment and health.<sup>2</sup>
- \* Commuting to work is a great way to get out on your bike every day and it has a number of advantages over other modes.<sup>2</sup>
- \* Saves money - on fuel or fares and once you have a bike, the running costs are very small. <sup>2</sup>
- \* Saves time – if your commute involves driving in traffic it is quite possible that you will cycle the same journey faster by bike than by car especially over a short distance.
- \* Provides exercise – when commuting by bike you are getting exercise twice a day without eating into time for other things. Cycling every day is a great way to maintain fitness.
- \* Enjoyment and wellbeing – Cycling to work can make the commute more active and engaging, and can become an enjoyable experience which you look forward to.<sup>2</sup>
- \* The cycle helps you to wake up fully in the morning and clears your head on the way home after work. When you arrive at work or home after your cycle you are refreshed and full of energy.<sup>2</sup>
- \* Environment – cycling to work minimises your impact on the environment.<sup>2</sup>

### Getting started

If you haven't been active in a while talk to your GP.<sup>1</sup>

### Gradual build up!

At the beginning start off slowly, gradually building up to the target of at least 30 minutes moderate intensity activity five days a week. Try 10 minutes at a time to begin with and build up at a comfortable pace from there. Remember during moderate intensity activity you should still be able to have a conversation.<sup>1</sup>

### Warm up and cool down!

Your body needs some time to warm up before you can be active at a moderate intensity, otherwise you risk injury or discomfort. Similarly, as you come to the end of your activity you need to allow your body return to its normal state. It is a good idea to include some stretching at the end of your activity.<sup>1</sup> For more information visit <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/get-started/keep-safe/>

**Be safe! Be Seen!** As well as being vital for safety it is also a legal requirement that you have a white front light, a red back light and a rear reflector on your bike. You may also like to consider wearing a reflective 'high-visibility' jacket, armbands or reflective strips on clothing.

### Have fun!

### References

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/get-started/keep-safe/>

<sup>2</sup> Discover Cycling, An Introduction to Cycling, National Trails Office and The Irish Sports Council <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/content/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Discover-Cycling-IT.pdf>

## Cycle Safely

- \* Take it easy, particularly if you're just getting back into the saddle! Plan your route in advance especially if you are a new cyclist, particularly at the beginning you might want to choose routes with cycle lanes, off road tracks or through parks (and not too many hills!)
- \* Avoid pushing through traffic to get to the front of the queue. All vehicles have a blind spot, where the driver can't see other vehicles around them. The driver ahead of you may not see you, depending on how aware of cyclists they are. Until you are a more experienced cyclist, it may be best to wait behind larger vehicles in traffic queues, instead of cycling inside them or overtaking, until it's safe to continue.
- \* Take your time. Cycle well clear of the edge of the roadside or kerb – debris and drains at the road edge are a hazard and put you at risk of getting a puncture and becoming invisible to drivers. Stay at least 1 metre from the kerb, more when passing a line of parked cars.
- \* Be safe be seen - As well as being vital for safety it is also a legal requirement that you have a white front light, a red back light and a rear reflector on your bike. You may also like to consider wearing a reflective 'high-visibility' jacket, armbands or reflective strips on clothing.
- \* Take care near road junctions; other road users might not notice you, even if you have right of way.
- \* Remember the Rules of the Road apply to all road users including cyclists! It is illegal to cycle on a footway or footpath, unless on a cycle track where one has been provided.
- \* Always ride in single file on narrow or busy roads and when riding round bends.
- \* If a car ahead of you indicates that it is turning left, don't move up between the car and the kerb, even if there is a marked cycle lane. Allow the car to make its turn safely.
- \* Give a clear signal to show other road users what you intend to do and always check for traffic before changing your position
- \* Look well ahead for obstructions in the road, such as drains, pot-holes, parked vehicles and traffic calming features, so that you do not have to swerve suddenly to avoid them.
- \* Leave plenty of room when passing parked vehicles (ideally not less than 1 metre) and watch out for doors being opened or pedestrians stepping into your path. Remember to signal in advance, check for traffic approaching from behind, and move out when it is safe to do so.
- \* Avoid wearing headphones when cycling, as they limit your awareness of what is happening around you.
- \* If you're ever in doubt about how to make a turn, or the safety of a manoeuvre on your bike, you can always get off and walk your bike! If in doubt, don't take a chance!

### What to wear?

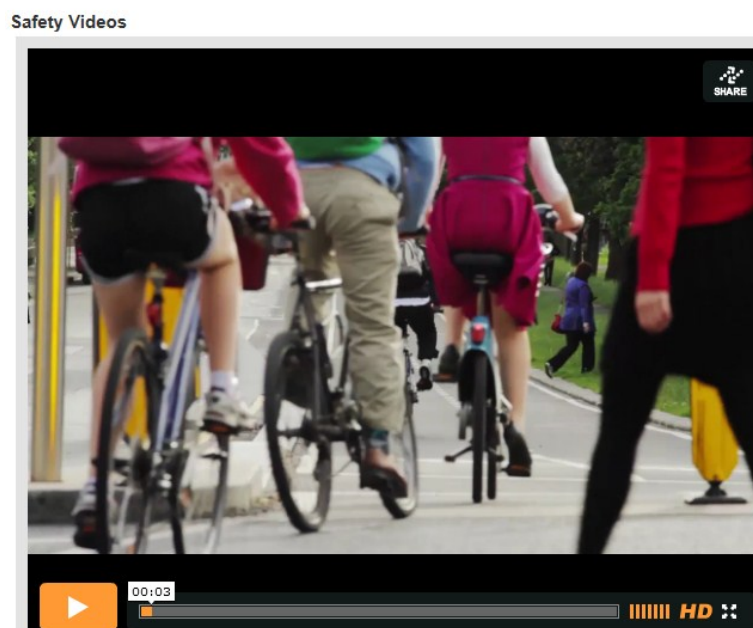
Wear whatever you're comfortable in. Layers are a good option as you can remove some if you get warm. If you can walk down the street in it, you can bike down the street in it. Other things to consider are waterproof clothing for the showery days and reflective/high visibility clothing to make sure that the traffic can see you. If you're wearing a cycle helmet, check it's the right size and that it hasn't been damaged.

**Please note** that cycling (like walking or driving) is an activity undertaken at the individual's risk. These tips should be read in conjunction with the advice of the Road Safety Authority, see <http://www.rsa.ie/RSA/Pedestrians-and-Cyclists/Cycling-safety/> or <http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Campaigns/Wrecked/Downloads/Cycle%20safety%20booklet.pdf>

## Cycle Safety Video from the Road Safety Authority

The following video was produced by the Road Safety Authority. This might be worth circulating to staff and posting on your intranet.

<http://www.rsa.ie/RSA/Road-Safety/Campaigns/Current-road-safety-campaigns/Cycle-Smart-Cycle-Safe/>



The film covers all the main safety aspects of cycling and what simply makes good cycling sense.

- 1. Equipment Check:** This covers the correct set-up of a bicycle and the necessary safety equipment. Is the saddle the correct height? Are the tyres nice and firm, and the bell, lights and brakes all working properly? The film also gives advice on the choosing and wearing of a properly approved helmet and the importance of high visibility clothing.
- 2. Rules of the Road:** Cyclists need to obey the same rules of the road as every other road user. Stopping at red lights, understanding and heeding road signs and markings is for the good of everyone's safety, including theirs.
- 3. Sharing the Road:** Cyclists need to be aware and mindful of other road users. As well as having to obey the same rules, they also have the same rights. This film covers subjects including how cyclists should pass parked cars, cycling in heavy traffic and the importance of maintaining a safe distance from larger vehicles.
- 4. Signalling:** Here, cyclists can learn the proper signalling procedures for making turns and using roundabouts, as well as the cautionary aspects of dealing with other vehicles when signalling.

Lots more information on cycle safety can be found on the Road Safety Authority website <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Pedestrians-and-Cyclists/Cycling-safety/>

## What bicycle to choose

There are many different types of bicycles available. It's a good idea to have a look around at different types of bicycles and speak to family, friends and colleagues about their bicycles. Buying a bicycle is like buying a pair of jeans – it is a very personal thing, but the information below will give you an outline of some of the types of bicycles available. You will find further information on bicycles available on the internet and your local bicycle shop should also be able to help you choose the right bicycle for you and to answer any questions you may have.

### Road Bikes

Lightweight, aerodynamic and fast, these bikes are built for speed. Road Bikes usually have handlebars that curl downwards and skinny tires. Some come with fixed gears that can take a bit of getting used to.



### Mountain Bikes

With strong frames and lots of gears, these bikes are designed for rough, 4x4 terrain and may be less suitable when cycling down a flat street.



### Hybrid Bikes

If your plan is to cycle to work, this is the type of bike most shops may suggest. They have the speed of a road bike, with all the gears of a mountain bike. You also get a more upright riding position which is better for all-round visibility.



### Folding Bikes

These bicycles are perfect if you want to store your bike inside. You can also take them on public transport.



### Town Bike

These bicycles often sport a basket up front for storing shopping and allow easy mount and demount in skirt and heels!



### Cargo Bikes

The perfect solution for anyone who has to move heavy items around, or cart young children to the park. Bulky, perhaps, if you've limited storage space at home.



### Electric Bikes

If you travel long distances, or if you've got a lot of hills ahead of you, the electric bicycle might be worth consider to give you an extra helping hand!

## Other things to consider when buying a bicycle

### What size to get?

Bikes come in different frame sizes to suit different bodies and leg lengths. Ensure when you buy your bike that the frame is the right size for your height and leg length, as otherwise you may find your back is stretched or your legs cramped when you cycle. Try before you buy to make sure you've chosen the right size for you!

### What to spend?

Decide in advance what your budget for your bike will be – if you're planning to cycle regularly, you may find it's worth making the investment to be more comfortable!

If you can access the Cycle To Work Scheme through your employer, this will make a great difference to your budget as the bike (and related accessories) are effectively tax-free.

### Carrying Bags

When buying your bike, consider getting a good quality carrier at the back to allow you to carry bags instead of wearing them. You can also get a basket at the front of the bike, but bear in mind that when it's full, it will add extra weight to your handlebars, which may take some getting used to when cycling.

### Take a Test Ride

Before you buy any bike, make sure you test out how it feels to cycle!

**It is also worth speaking with HR in your workplace about your organisation's Cycle to Work scheme, where you can purchase a bike and associated equipment at a discount.**

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## Bicycle Security

### Buy a bike lock

Your individual needs will determine which lock, or collection of locks will best fit. It is worth taking advice from a local bike shop. You may find that one lock will not be sufficient, as you'll need to lock both the frame of your bike and both wheels for the bike to be secured properly.

There is an accreditation scheme for locks called "Sold Secure". Sold Secure is a UK scheme but Sold Secure products are also widely available in Ireland. Sold Secure categorises locks into bronze, silver and gold ratings according to how secure a lock is. They perform a variety of standard tests on a brand new lock, including a number of attacks with different tools and time the period taken to break into the lock. The award is granted according to how many of these set tests a lock withstands. Bronze is the lowest award and Gold is the highest. A gold award does not mean that the lock is impenetrable, just that it withstood all that Sold Secure threw at it within the allocated time! Look for a Sold Secure logo on the packaging of your lock or an equivalent scheme. If you're not sure, check with your local bike shop.

## **Bicycle Security Continued...**

### **Choose your location**

Always park it in a busy, well-lit area where people are mingling and frequently walking past. Ideally park in an area where there are CCTV cameras. If possible, lock your bike near other bikes. Use cycle parking if possible as some management companies remove bikes from railings!

### **Lock your bike properly**

Always lock your bike to an immovable, unbreakable object in a busy, well-lit place. Lock it up 'tight' to make moving it around difficult when you have it parked. If you're locking your bike to a pole, ensure its base is fully secured in the ground, and that there's a sign or light at the top, so that your bike (and locks!) can't be lifted over the top of the pole. Secure all removable parts i.e. the wheels and seat. You may need an additional longer cable lock to secure these.

### **Further information**

There is plenty of information on bicycle security as well as bicycle insurance available on the internet and your local bicycle shop should also be able to answer any questions you may have. Household policies are usually the cheapest option to insure a bicycle, but you must ensure that the insurer covers the bike when in storage away from your home, and that the bike's value doesn't exceed the upper claim limit. If the bike can't be covered on home insurance, (i.e. the bike is too expensive) look for alternative or specific insurance.

Members of Cycling Ireland may be covered through their membership, or specific insurance can be arranged through companies such as Cyclesure.ie or chill.ie (or other suppliers).

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