

TIPS FOR THE NEW RIDER

(and reminders for the vet)

Tip 1: Seat Pack Necessities

- These items are inexpensive, easy-to-carry insurance. Even if you're not sure how to fix a flat or use certain tools, a passing cyclist may be able to assist, provided you are packing these items:

- Patch kit with fresh glue

- Tire levers

- Spare inner tube

- Multi-function tool or Basic tool kit

- Chain Tool

- Pump or Co2

- Water, water, water (hydration is important!)

- Carrying the following items is smart too, they can make your ride more enjoyable:

- Sunscreen and lip protectant

- One or two energy bars

- Hand cleaner wipe

- Identification & Medical Insurance Card

- Cell phone

- Flashing red light on rear of bike

- \$5.00 for snacks

Tip 2: Proper Helmet Strap Adjustment

- A properly worn and adjusted helmet is a safer helmet. Helmet straps are adjusted in several ways: The yoke buckles (plastic pieces connecting from and rear straps) should rest at the corner of your jawbone, below your ears. In use, the side yolk straps must be taut with the helmet level on your head as you fasten the chin strap. Excess chin strap webbing can be trimmed and the cut edge melted to prevent fraying. Please let us know if you need assistance with the strap adjustment or helmet fitting.

Tip 3: Three tests for Secure Helmet Fit

- The shake test. Shake your head from side to side. The fit pads should hold it snugly in place.

- The open-mouth test. When you buckle the chin strap and open your mouth, you should feel the helmet press firmly against the top of your head.

- Peel-off test. If you can "peel" the helmet off your head to the front or rear when the chin strap is tightened, the straps need to be tightened more.

Tip 4: Why use a Cycle Computer?

- Distance, speed and elapsed time readouts help you gauge your fitness.

The total distance function tracks your total miles to date.

- Look for these new features: altimeter, calorie use, and heart rate, GPS

- Navigate smarter by being able to measure actual distance ridden for use with your map.

Tip 5: Track your Heart Rate

- A heart rate monitor is a great way to take the guesswork out of training. To achieve best results, keep your training heart rate at or just below your Maximum Aerobic Rate. Here is how to calculate it: Subtract your age from 180, then modify the resulting number. If you have or are recovering from a major illness or you are on medication, subtract 10. If you haven't exercised much, are recovering from injury or regressing in your training, or often get sick, subtract 5. If you have been training for more than two years without complications, subtract 0. If you have been training for more than two years without complications and are growing stronger, add 5. The result is your Maximum Aerobic Rate. More information on this can be found in Dr. Philip Maffetone's book, In Fitness and in Health, available through VeloNews Books.

Tip 6: Off-Road Vibration

Advances in bicycles and suspension are allowing riders to negotiate rougher terrain than ever. When you encounter particularly bumpy trails, pay attention to parts that can vibrate loose. Double check everything bolted or strapped to the frame and carry wrenches you'll need in case you have to tighten a part during a ride.

Tip 7: Increase your Hand Comfort and Safety

- Relax. Rigid arms transmit shock to hands and body. Flex your elbows slightly and relax your arms and shoulders for more comfort and control. Your grip on the handlebars should be firm but not tense.

- Say goodbye to numbness. Keep your hands, shoulders and neck comfortable by frequently changing your hand position on the bars and occasionally standing up to pedal.

- Keep your wrist straight to avoid tingling fingers and compression of your ulnar nerve.

- Have the right fit. Make sure your stem and handlebar are properly positioned, reducing unnecessary pressure on the hands.

- Wear cycling gloves. They help prevent numbness, provide crash protection, improve grip and absorb sweat.

Tip 8: Quick-Wash your bike after riding

- Fill a bucket with warm, soapy water. Use a mild detergent or an automotive soap. Give the bike an all-over scrubbing with a large, soft, nylon brush.

- Next, douse the bike with a bucket of clean water or spray it gently with a hose. High pressure from a hose or carwash forces water into greased bearing surfaces and can damage critical components such as hubs, headset or bottom bracket.

Tip 9: Hand positions

- Long distance on the road can be rough on your hands and body.
- To keep your hands and arms feeling fresh, try these tips:
 - Move your hands to the brake hoods, especially for out-of-the-saddle climbing.
 - Try sliding your hands farther forward on the hoods to stretch your back and give your hands a break.
 - During long or rough descents, use different finger combinations for squeezing brake levers.

Tip 10: Improving your Off-road Riding

- On steep descents, get better control by lowering your seat and moving as rearward as possible.
- On steep ascents, distribute your weight evenly to prevent wheelies (weight is too far back) or a loss of rear-tire traction (too far forward). Stay in a low gear for high pedal revs to maintain momentum. This is easier when you shift before you're under maximum load.
- Deflate your tires 5-15 PSI before bumpy descents for a smoother ride with better control. Softer tires also save you from a pounding ride. Do not go below the minimum pressure shown on the sidewalls of the tires. Re-inflate up to maximum pressure for the smoother trails or pavement.
- For riding over curbs and obstacles, un-weight and lift your front tire over the obstacle, then smoothly shift your weight forward to allow the rear wheel to follow more easily.
- Don't ride beyond your ability, even though your bike may give you a feeling of immortality. Develop your skill gradually to avoid injury.

Tip 11: Locking your Bike

- With a U-lock, find a post securely mounted in cement, preferably large enough to fill the inner space of the lock so thieves can't get extra leverage. Make sure the bike and lock can't be lifted over the top of the post. For maximum security, remove the front wheel and use the U-lock to encircle the post, frame, and the front and rear rims.
- With a cable-lock, keep the lock as high off the ground and the cable as taut as possible. This will help prevent a thief from smashing or cutting it.
- Your helmet can be secured by putting the U-lock or cable through both side triangles of the straps and vent holes.

Tip 12: Technique for a Smoother Ride

- Relax your elbows and shoulders and bend your knees as you lift three to five inches off the seat. Absorb a

bump or hole by letting your bike simply roll over or through it as you un-weight.

- Do not straighten or stiffen your legs and arms.
- Relieve impact and pressure on your hands, wrists, and shoulders by maintaining control without clenching the handlebars. (See tip 7).
- Always look where you want to go, not at the bump or hole you want to avoid.

Tip 13: Adjust your seat for comfort and efficiency

- The correct seat position is easy to attain, just ask your local bike shop to assist you.

- If your seat is:

Too low, you waste energy and invite cramps.

Too high, you can stress your knees

Either way, excessive hip motion increases friction on your sit bones. Sloping forward causes your weight to shift to your hands, creating discomfort. Sloping rearward, causes instability.

- Also, a seat's shape and construction play a big part in your comfort.

Tip 14: Watch you fluid level

- For maximum alertness and performance, drink regularly to replenish fluid lost by perspirations. When? Drink before you are thirsty using the "hour" rule.
- Drink 21-ounces (regular sized water bottle) of water an hour before you ride, another bottle for each hour of the ride and a final bottle within an hour of your return.

Tip 15: Don't wait until the big event to try a new energy food or drink.

- Try a sample pack first, to make sure it agrees with your system and to determine the flavor you like best. More energy makes your cycling experience more fun and you'll return home less hungry and less prone to binge.
- Also, remember that energy bars have a shelf life and always taste best fresh.

Tip 16: Why cycling shoes are better

- Rigid soles mean more comfort and more efficient transfer of power to the pedals
- Nylon mesh and synthetic leather uppers for easy care and excellent durability. No stretch, so the fit stays snug.
- Strap closures for the precise adjustment all over your foot provide the best combinations of comfort and efficiency.
- Cleats for better grip. Positive shoe-to-pedal connection gives you more security and consistent power throughout the pedal stroke. You'll go faster using less energy