



Rediscover riding

A starter guide for bicycle riders



Queensland
Government



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Welcome to fun, freedom and fresh air

Riding a bike is part of Queensland life. For children, it's hours of joy and discovery that builds skills, confidence and independence. For adults, it's an enjoyable way to explore the great outdoors and grab some exercise, me time or family time.

**With a few tips and a bit of advice,
it's easy to get rolling.**



Safety and confidence



No matter what age, feeling safe and in control is the biggest thing between you and years of bike riding fun. That means you need access to the right bike and accessories. You need to know where to go for a bike ride. And you need to understand the essential rules. **So let's get started!**

What to ride



1. The right size bike will build skills and confidence faster. Whether it's a mountain bike, hybrid, road, kids, electric or BMX, make sure the rider can:

- place the balls of both feet on the ground when sitting (note that seat height can be adjusted)
- straddle the centre bar when standing (i.e. feet flat on the ground) with 2-5cm clearance
- reach the handlebars comfortably when sitting on the bike so that riding is safer and easier
- ensure that the bike seat is in a straight position and perfectly aligned with the bike frame.

Balance bikes (without pedals) are great for teaching both adults and children to find their balance before starting to pedal.

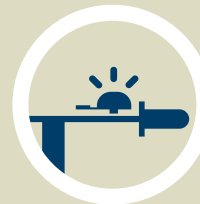
Source: San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, *Balance bikes vs. training wheels* (January 1, 2012)
<https://sfbike.org/news/balance-bikes-vs-training-wheels/>

It is recommended that handlebar ends be covered for kids as exposed handlebar ends can injure kids in a fall.



2. Wearing a helmet is a legal requirement in Queensland for all bike riders and their passengers. It doesn't have to be the most expensive option, but the helmet must:

- comply with the Australian Standards AS 2063 or AS/NZS 2063
- be worn at all times when riding, but never over a cap or hat.



3. Every bike must be fitted with a **bell** or similar warning device. This isn't just for emergencies, but also to kindly let riders and pedestrians know you're there.



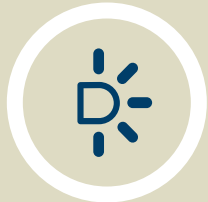
4. The brakes on a bike must always be in good working order. It's important to understand and check if your bike has hand brakes, a pedal brake or both.



5. Clothing and footwear play a big role. Think bright, light coloured clothing that won't get caught in wheels or chains, and enclosed shoes with good grip.

What to ride continued

You must not ride at night or in hazardous weather (like heavy rain or fog) unless your bike is fitted with lights and a reflector. You must have a flashing or steady white light that is visible for at least 200 metres from the front and a flashing or steady red light that is visible for at least 200 metres from the back, as well as a red reflector visible for at least 50 metres from the rear.



6. Reflectors and lights, white at the front and red at the back, help to keep you visible at all times. It doesn't have to be late at night for the light to be poor.



7. A drink bottle, sunscreen, backpack, lock and bike tools won't necessarily keep you safer, but you'll be glad you've got them if it's hot, you need to adjust something or you just need a break.



Bike maintenance

It's one thing to have a bike, but it's another thing to have rideable bike in your garage. Before you go for a ride, always remember the ABC checklist:

A is for Air **B** is for Brakes **C** is for Chain

If you're not exactly sure what to look out for or how to maintain your bike, take it down to your local bike shop as it may need a service, or book into one of the many bike maintenance courses that are available.



Where to ride

The best place to start is off road. Every year, Queenslanders gain access to more and more safe, separated and connected bike paths. There may be paths near you that you already know about. But there may be amazing routes that you've never even heard of. All it takes is a quick internet search and you might be surprised about all the different places you can go for a ride!

More than just paths, think about wide-open flat spaces such as parks that can be a perfect place to start. Just remember, these spaces are shared with other riders and pedestrians so take care and be courteous.

Local councils, schools and bicycle groups often hold group rides and run bike starter and maintenance courses for kids and grown ups. These take place in a safe and supportive environment with like-minded people.

Before the age of 12, children should ride off road. If it is necessary to use the road, an adult should be there to supervise.





Essential rules

Confusion can quickly lead to safety issues. That's why you must be aware of the rules and remember – a bike is a vehicle and riders must follow all road rules in *any* public space. Here are some of the essential rules to keep in mind:

- Keep to the left, unless turning right.
- Use hand signals when turning right.
- Give way to pedestrians.
- Obey all path and road signs.
- Always wear a helmet.
- Ride no more than two abreast (and no more than 1.5m apart).
- Speed limits may apply in some areas.

For experienced riders who choose to ride on a shared road, drivers must stay wide of the rider by giving at least 1m clearance in a 60km/h or less speed zone and at least 1.5m where the speed limit is more than 60km/h.

Many people do not realise that it *is* legal to ride on footpaths in Queensland, unless otherwise signed. So, take advantage of the fact that you can ride on footpaths when you're going from A to B, remembering that you must give way to pedestrians.

It's also important to know that bike riders are allowed to ride across pedestrian crossings at traffic lights and zebra crossings, by proceeding slowly and giving way to pedestrians at all times.

Safe riding skills

If you are teaching kids (or anyone), always set the right example in terms of attitude and behaviour. Safe bike riding is more than just staying upright. The following skills are vital so why not tick them off as you go:

- getting on and off the bike
- balance and coordination
- steering control – left and right
- comfortably walking the bike
- braking – slowing and stopping
- awareness of surroundings
- common courtesy to all users
- signalling and positioning for turns
- negotiating path and street crossings
- positioning on roads if experienced.

Some handy tips

Even with the right advice and a safe place to ride, starting on a bike (for the first time or again) can still be intimidating. Make things even more comfortable and enjoyable with these handy tips:

- always check your bike before you ride
- familiarise yourself with the feel of the bike
- start with balanced rolling (without pedalling)
- walk the area first so you know the conditions
- ride with someone who knows the area
- avoid busy (peak hour commuter) times
- respect all other riders and pedestrians
- slow down in unpredictable situations
- when in doubt, hop off – it's okay to walk
- stumbles happen – keep trying, it's worth it!

Starting with a balance bike (without pedals) can make learning easier and faster than using training wheels.

Source: San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, *Balance bikes vs. training wheels* (January 1, 2012)
<https://sfbike.org/news/balance-bikes-vs-training-wheels/>

From experience to confidence

Like most things in life, the more you ride a bike, the better you will get. There are plenty of different ways to build on your bike riding knowledge, skills and experience without going beyond your comfort zone:

- Check your local area for organised rides – they're not just for the elite and are a great way to get road experience.
- Search for maps of interesting bike paths and trails – the great outdoors are even better on a bike.
- Connect with a local Bicycle User Group as they conduct social rides for all levels and know the best places to pedal.
- Teach someone else how to ride a bike – it's a great way to reinforce your skills and perhaps find a new riding buddy.
- Ask around – you might be surprised who amongst your family and friends are keen to go out for a bike ride.
- Remember that children under the age of 12 should ride off-road, and if really necessary to go on the road, children should always be accompanied by an adult.



Riding a bike is fun! Queenslanders ride their bikes for purpose or pleasure or both. Many have ridden a bike before and want to do it again.

The best advice is to start slow, with short journeys in off-road environments. You will then progressively build your knowledge and skills.

When you rediscover riding, you may realise that there is no better way to experience Queensland than on a bike!

It's time to rediscover riding...

So let's get our bikes out of garages.
Let's get on our bikes and go for a ride.
Let's enjoy our unique climate and scenery.
Let's experience that bike riding feeling
of fun and freedom!





For more information, resources and tips, please visit www.tmr.qld.gov.au/cycling or contact your local council.

Happy bike riding!