



CyclingUK
Community
Cycle Clubs

How to teach learn-to-ride



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Planning

Location:

Ball court, flat open paved space or sports hall.

Equipment:

- Cones – ideally round flat non-slip rubber discs.
- 15mm pedal spanner – to remove and re-fit pedals. *Optional
- Track pump.
- Allen key for adjusting seat post height.

Progression:

Sloped area to practice using brakes.

Paperwork:

Risk assessment and register.




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Preparation & introduction

Preparation

- If you are confident to do so and the pedals come off easily, without the need for extra tools, use a 15mm pedal spanner to turn them backwards to remove them. The left pedal has a left-hand thread. Each pedal is marked L or R. **Note:** it is possible to teach scooting without this step.
- Make sure all tyres are inflated to recommended pressure (see sidewall of the tyre).
- Go through the bike, helmet and equipment checks.

Introduction

Outline the session plan key learning points for learn-to-ride:

- Gaining balance through scooting.
- Starting and stopping safely.
- Pedalling for longer than a minute.

Next steps

- Use cones to fine tune the control of the bike.
- Use sloped area for use of brakes for controlling speed.



Procedure

Outcome: to understand brakes and get on and off bike

- **Brakes:** squeezing the brakes can be tested whilst walking alongside the bike before someone sits on the saddle. Explain that brakes are for control of speed not just stopping – adjust pressure on the levers.

Note: lower the seat post to a level where feet are flat on the floor and there is a slight bend in the knees (use quick release lever or Allen key to loosen bolt – then retighten).

Demonstrate getting on and off the bike:

On:

- Stand on the clean side (opposite chain side).
- Press both brake levers to keep the bike stable.
- Tilt the bike towards you.
- Swing right leg over the seat and sit on the saddle or step through the frame if more comfortable.

Note: Check seat height is correct (feet flat with a slight bend in the knee).

Off:

- Press both brake levers to keep the bike stable.
- Lean the bike to the left with more weight on the left foot.
- Stand up off the seat and swing the right leg over the seat back to standing on the left side.



Finding balance

Outcome: glide for three seconds or more, then introduce pedals

- **Start position:** seated, legs should be in a triangular position to keep the person stable on the bike.
- **Move:** scoot either by walking or lifting both feet at the same time.
- **Move:** sit on the saddle and lean the bike side to side, taking one foot off the floor on the opposite side to steady yourself.

Objective:

Participants can scoot with both feet gliding off the floor for at least three seconds.

Top tips:

- Focus on the core of the body as balance comes from there.
- Use a sloped area for use of brakes for controlling speed.



Pattern to embed

If you have removed the pedals reattach them now.

Outcome: Learn push-step-brakes

- Press brake levers.
- Get pedal ready with the pedal in line with the down tube of the frame.
- Look forward.
- Release brake levers.
- Deep breath (let them know there is no rush and to relax).
- **Push:** down on the pedal with the right foot.
- **Step:** take one step with left foot.
- **Brakes:** press brakes to stop. Explain which is the front and back brake.

Top tips:

- Check the bike is in a medium gear.
- Advise them to look where they want to go and not at the ground or where they don't want to go.

Outcomes:

- Push the pedal hard enough to take one step with the foot.
- Comfortable with speed.
- Using brakes to stop in a controlled way.

Natural Progression:

- Repeating this movement will make the left foot find the pedal automatically.
- If not, prompt them to push the left pedal to build up the sequence.



Other techniques

If the **push-step-brakes** stage is a challenge then use this interim method.

Scooting with one foot:

- Right foot on the pedal at six o'clock.
- Press down to keep it in position. Scoot with the left.

Outcome:

- The left foot glides off the floor for three seconds.

Progression:

- Prompt to take left foot to pedal or go back to stage 4, pattern to embed.

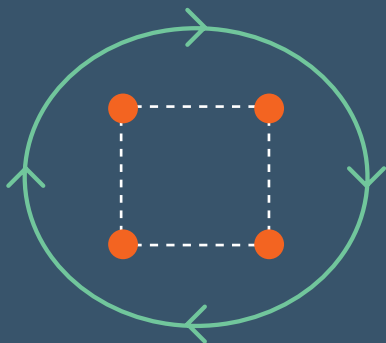
Support balance to build confidence:

- Seek permission to hold the back of their clothing first. This is so you can pull them back to centre if they veer off.
- Whilst supporting them, get them to turn both pedals. This helps to embed the pattern of movement as a behaviour, and aids them to move on to the next stage.
- If you feel you are doing a lot of dragging, they have not yet mastered gliding. Go back to learn to glide.

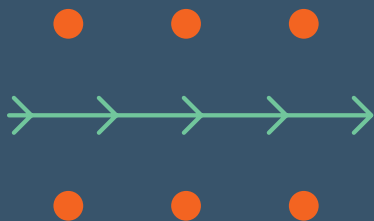
Learning goal: cycle for a minute unaided

Progression

Outcome: steering and turning



- Place cones in a square the size of a ball court and ride outside of the square.



- Place two lines of cones to create a straight pathway about two metres apart. Ride between the cones to follow path.

- For progression, use a sloped area to control speed by using brakes.
- Explain to press left brake before the right brake.

Top tips:

- Advise not to pedal through the entire turn as they'll go too fast to make a controlled turn.
- Go clockwise and anti-clockwise so they don't get too comfortable with one direction more than the other.
 - Introduce coasting on a bike, using the momentum to carry you without pedalling.

ABCD check

A quick one minute check to be done every time you ride.



is for air – keep the tyres pumped up and check the wheels spin freely. If they don't, look for brakes or mudguards rubbing, or a sideways wobble of the wheel.



is for brakes – the most important part of a bike. To check the front break, push the bike forward and apply the lever (usually the right-hand one). The bike should stop. For the back brake, do the same but push the bike backwards. If in doubt, get it checked.



is for chains, cables and cogs – look for frayed cables, oil the chain, and check the handlebars and saddle don't move. Watch out for anything unusual.



is for drop – check that the handlebars and saddle are secure. Lift the front of the bike by the handlebars so the front wheel is about 10 cm off the ground, then let it drop. Listen for any unusual noises and watch for loose or falling parts. Repeat with the rear of the bike.

Helmet Check

Before the session, gather the group and ask them to have their bike helmets in their hands. Ask them to check:

- Is the helmet free from any visible damage (inside and out)?
- Does the helmet circumference fit your head?
- Does the helmet cover your forehead and is it level?
- Does the chin strap buckle work properly?

Fitting a helmet

When you shake your head from side-to-side, a correctly fitted helmet will stay in place.

1

Place level just above eyebrows.

2

Side straps meet below the ear to form a Y shape.

3

Less than two fingers space between your chin and strap.



Equipment & clothing check

Headwear

Other than helmets, participants may need to wear a hat to maintain warmth. Very thin hats and headwear such as material tubes, thin beanies and skull cap hats are recommended so that the helmet remains securely positioned on the head.

Upper body

Layers and materials appropriate to the conditions of day and season; during the winter, participants may need garments with close fitting necks.

Trousers

If wearing long trousers, tuck them tighter around the ankles, tuck into socks or close to the ankle with a band.

Eyewear

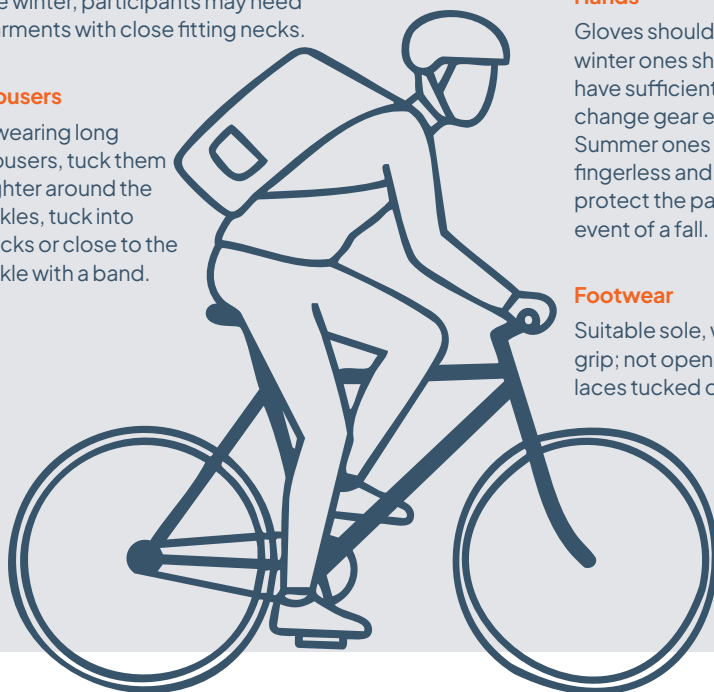
Protective glasses are recommended. Low branches, mud and grit are all potential impacts to the face and eyes. Cycling specific glasses are not necessarily required. Safety specs from works suppliers are effective and often reasonably priced.

Hands

Gloves should be worn; winter ones should have sufficient feel to change gear effectively. Summer ones can be fingerless and should protect the palms in the event of a fall.

Footwear

Suitable sole, with a non-slip grip; not open toed/sandals; laces tucked out of the way.





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