

TECHNICAL/LEGAL/HEALTH
YOUR QUESTIONS
OUR ANSWERS

Q&A

MEET THE EXPERTS



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Photo: iStockphoto.com

There is no criminal liability for children under the age of ten, so cycling on the pavement is not prohibited for them

{LEGAL}

Cycling on pavements

Q Cycling on footways ('pavements') is often said to be illegal, but numerous kids – quite sensibly – do it every day. So is it legal to a certain age or up to a certain speed, or perhaps specifically on kids' bikes? Is the law the same throughout the UK?

KEITH RODGERS

A Rule 64 of the Highway Code (which applies to England, Scotland and Wales), states you MUST NOT cycle on a pavement. The code cites Section 72 of the Highways Act 1835. Today, cycling on the footpath is punishable by fixed penalty notice of £30 under Section 51 and Schedule 3 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

Cycling on the pavement is therefore illegal but there is no criminal liability for children under the age of ten. Section 50 Children and Young Persons Act 1933 says: 'It shall be conclusively presumed that no child under the age of [ten] years can be guilty of any offence.'

The moment a child turns ten years of age, they are potentially liable to a fine awarded for such criminal offence. A Magistrates' Court may order that the parent or guardian of the child concerned pay the fine incurred by that child by virtue of the powers of Criminal Courts

(Sentencing) Act 2000 Section 137.

It is accepted by everyone that for young children under the age of ten that it is acceptable that they ride on the pavement. At around the age of ten it is recommended the children undergo cycle training, such as Bikeability. This is a training course designed to give youngsters the skills and confidence to ride their bicycles on Britain's roads. You can find out more about it, and locate instructors, on CTC's website: ctc.org.uk/cycletraining.

The Bikeability scheme has so far provided training to over 250,000 youngsters, and the aim is that by 2012 half a million children will have been trained through the scheme.

The CTC Guide to Family Cycling (ISBN 978-0-9548176-4-0) provides good practical advice in relation to cycling with children. You can buy it direct from the CTC Membership Dept: 0844 736 8451.

PAUL KITSON

CONTACT
THE
EXPERTS

Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p80). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, tel: **0844 736 8450**, cycling@ctc.org.uk (general enquiries) or Chris Juden, technical@ctc.org.uk (technical enquiries). You can also write to: CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, tel: 0844 736 8452.

{MEDICAL}

Hip bursitis

Q I ride around 120 miles per week, mainly on the road. For six months now, I have had pain in the outer part of my left hip area, but also sometimes in my groin, buttocks and lumbar back. I never feel this when I am cycling or walking; it comes on during the night after a ride. My doctor told me he thinks it may be bursitis. Despite being very careful with my bike set-up, doing some stretching and taking ibuprofen, the pain is getting worse, to the extent I am concerned that I may have to stop cycling soon. Can you help?

JOHN BURNS

A Hip (or, more specifically, trochanteric) bursitis, refers to inflammation in a small sac of fluid (bursa) cushioning the bony prominence on the outside at the top of the thigh bone (greater trochanter). The bursa aids smooth movement of the muscles and tendons over the bone.

When inflamed, usually through recurrent friction or as a result of direct trauma, the bursa causes localised pain which may radiate more widely. Cycling can contribute to the condition, although many who have it find they can cycle without pain. Try lowering your saddle height slightly – a high saddle can predispose you to trochanteric bursitis. Although usually self-limiting, it can last several weeks or months. In addition to taking ibuprofen (an anti-inflammatory drug), reduce your level of any activity that worsens it (running and climbing stairs are examples) and apply an ice pack several times a day.



**Letter
OF
THE
MONTH**

A high saddle can predispose you to trochanteric bursitis. Try lowering it slightly. If the pain continues, consult your GP

Photo: iStockphoto.com

Avoid lying on the affected side as that may exacerbate the condition.

If you have low medial foot arches, causing your feet to roll inwards (excessive pronation), consider using over-the-counter orthotic arch support insoles.

A corticosteroid injection can be performed if other measures fail. I don't know which stretching exercises you have been doing but stretching the iliotibial band and strengthening the hip abductor muscles can help. A physiotherapist can assess you and offer personalised advice.

If the problem persists or worsens, then see your GP again. They can review the original diagnosis and consider referral to a specialist for further treatment.

DR MATT BROOKS

{TECHNICAL}

Flipping Chains

Q I like to remove my chain for a thorough spring-clean. When it goes back on, is it better to: replace it exactly as it came off; turn it inside out so that the outer edge becomes the inner; reverse its direction; or flip it sideways and longways?

ROGER PHILLIPS,

A I think it ought to spread the pin/bush wear over a bit more surface area, if

the chain bends the opposite way as it unwraps from the rear sprocket and re-wraps onto the chainring. If that's what you mean by inside-out (so the side nearest the teeth flips to the outside), I think that's worth doing. Though how much this subtle shift in the wearing surface extends the life of a chain will be hard to tell, given the overwhelming effects of random factors such as weather and hills. It can't do any harm.

Reversing the



direction of the chain changes nothing much, but flipping laterally, so the side nearest the spokes is now away from them, may even up the effects of out-of-line running, which can sometimes wear one end of the pins more than the other. Topology rules that you can flip a chain simultaneously in any two of the three possible senses (inside-

A chain gauge like this one from Park is the easiest way to keep track of chain wear



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out, reversal, lateral). To combine the perhaps most useful first and last of those you should twist the chain 180° about its length before re-joining. Users of more exotic machinery, i.e. most 10-speeds and a few 9-speeds, should beware that some chains can be run only one way round.

CHRIS JUDEEN

[TECHNICAL] Setting Seat height

Q I've just seen an article on a web magazine (Bike Radar) about setting seat height. What is your view on this?

ADAM COFFMAN,

A My advice on setting seat height is this. Either: put your heel (wearing normal low-heeled touring shoes in which you can also walk) on the pedal and adjust the saddle until your leg just straightens at the bottom of pedalling stroke, without you having to lean at all to that side.

Or: measure leg length by subtracting your sitting height from your barefoot stature, add 5% to that, set the saddle that far from the pedal at its lowest position. Measure between the top of the pedal and the top of the saddle at its

Setting your saddle height using the straight-leg heel-on-pedal method does work, giving your legs a slight bend when the ball of each foot is on the pedal

widest point.

Both of these are just starting positions. Expect to make small adjustments from there, e.g. 2mm at a time and probably not more than 10mm total, until it feels exactly right. Get someone to ride behind to see if your hips start to rock, which means you've gone too high.

If you're seeking my view on that article however: I think the simple advice is wrong for the average rider and the more technical methods described are simply too technical!

Their figure of 109% of inseam comes from a study which maximised power output over a short time. It's a figure you'll often see quoted but it's not what you want if you intend to spend all day pedalling the bike (obviously at less than maximum power). It's different strokes for different folks, and something like 105% of leg length will be more comfortable in the long run.

But be sure to measure leg length my way. Inseam isn't

very accurate, since the height of your crotch doesn't exactly correspond with the position of your sit bones, which are of course what you actually sit on the saddle. These bones are usually (but not always) a bit higher than the pubis, which is another reason my 105% is less than their 109%.

And another probable reason they find the heel on pedal method results in the saddle too low is that they're wearing the wrong shoes: road-racer shoes, which have no heel. Wear sensible shoes and you'll get a sensible result.

CHRIS JUDEEN



[TECHNICAL] OS Maps and GPS

Q I've got a Garmin satnav in my car and like it. Is there a Garmin GPS that you'd recommend for cycling?

I've been looking at the Oregon. Could I use the Memory-Maps on my computer to create routes and transfer them to the Garmin?

ERIC ANGELL

A You can certainly plan a route on Memory-Map on your PC, then upload the

route, or track, to any GPS unit. What you cannot do is transfer those maps. That's because OS require their mapping to be locked into the hardware and software of each different manufacturer they license it to, so as to prevent illicit copying.

Garmin make very reliable GPS units, but the ones (like the Oregon) that are capable of displaying raster mapping (i.e. images of printed maps such as OS Landranger) cost more and have a shorter battery life than the simpler ones, such as the very reliable Etrex Vista that I have, that only display 'vector' mapping.

If you buy a Garmin Oregon (or Dakota) plus Garmin's version of OS maps, you'll spend quite a lot of money but have all the facilities you want.

For my part, I'm happy to plan routes using free tools on the internet – usually bikehike.

co.uk, which has OS Landranger and the OSM Cycle mapping that I prefer. I then upload each track (reducing it to under 500 trackpoints) to my Etrex where I view the wiggly line against a background of... OSM Cycle again. The plotted version of this is not such a pretty map as Landranger, or as clear as the web-based OSM Cycle, but virtually all the same information is there (more information than OS when it comes to cycling facilities), and because it's plotted differently according to scale, zooming in and out works better. Best of all: a ready loaded SD card covering the whole of the British Isles costs only £15 from opencyclemap.org.

CHRIS JUDEEN

[TECHNICAL] Lightweight trekking bikes

Q We are looking to buy new bikes for touring and don't want drop bars or heavy hybrids. Our price range is £700-£1500 per bike. Could you please advise us?

BARNEY & JENNY QUINN

A It's a problem: flat-bar road bikes are light, but don't have enough clearance to fit the tyres and mudguards you'll want for towpaths. Clearance weighs nothing, but most hybrids that have it are heavy nevertheless. Yet there are some lighter hybrids. Look at the Trek 'FX' models, for example. Like all hybrids the gears are a bit high, and they lack mudguards and carriers, but both problems can be solved with a few alterations. If you want a trekking bike that comes equipped, look at the Koga 'light touring' range.

Really light hybrids, and especially trekking (i.e. flat-bar touring) bikes, are hard to find in Britain because they cost a lot and wealthy Brits don't tend to cycle unless they're into racing. Of course, there are many exceptions (most of them probably members of CTC) but mass-marketing does not care for exceptions! So it is that those Kogas sell through only a few dealers, whilst the Cannondale Tesoro Light we reviewed last year – that I liked so much I bought it – is no longer sold here. To find such a treasure, you now have to go to Germany, where trekking bikes are common and can even be had with carbon-fibre frames!

CHRIS JUDEEN