

CYCLOPEDIA

Knowhow



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Making sense of commonly
misunderstood subjects

Clothing

How can I cycle in a jilbab or long dress?

It really is easier than you might think! There are only a few things to consider, then you'll be able to cycle in the clothing in which you feel most comfortable. Many of the tips below are also relevant to cycling in a long skirt or dress. The only real difference is that a jilbab is worn over other clothing.

You need to lift the jilbab up a bit to keep the fabric away from the chain. You can: tie the fabric in a knot on your side; tuck a few inches of your jilbab into your trousers underneath at the waist; or put a belt over your jilbab and hitch up the jilbab a bit over the belt. My personal method is to just lift up my jilbab a little before getting on. If it moves out of the way, I just move it back. You need to be comfortable taking your hand off the handlebar to do this, but it's a useful skill to have anyway.

A bike with a step-through frame makes it easier to get on and off. Generally this would be a hybrid or a Dutch roadster, but any frame with lower top tube and thus a lower standover height would work – for example, a small-wheeled bike like a Brompton.

Choose breathable fabrics and nothing too



A jilbab is no barrier to cycling, so long as you have the right bike

Left: Jenna Selby

flowy. If you have a very loose jilbab, you can always try the trick described in the sidebar to get some of the extra fabric out of the way. Stretchy fabrics should be avoided as these are hard to remove from a chain if they do get caught! You also want thin layers under and over your jilbab, so you can adjust your clothing more easily as you ride.

On windy days, a jilbab, skirt or dress can sometimes fly up. To prevent this, use a horseshoe-shaped trouser clip over the jilbab just below the knees. The jilbab will come up a little bit while cycling whatever the weather, so I always wear loose trousers underneath mine – with a trouser clip on my right ankle to prevent the trouser fabric getting caught in the chain. ●

In for a penny...

Take a penny and a rubber band or hair band. Place the penny over the fabric in your skirt behind you, between your legs about halfway up the skirt (position will vary depending on length).

With your other hand, grab the penny from the front, through the fabric of the skirt. You should now be holding the penny and a double layer of skirt. Take the rubber band and tie a knot around the penny, holding it in the fabric.

This will bring together the skirt between your legs so it becomes like a pair of shorts/trousers. This hack makes it possible to cycle in a skirt without anything underneath being on show.

Cycling for women

For a wide range of advice on women's cycling, visit:
cyclinguk.org/women

Change your bike, not your clothes

Everyday clothing is fine if you've got mudguards and...



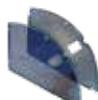
Step-through bike
Ridgeback
Avenida 6,
£449.99
ridgeback.co.uk



Chain guard
SKS Chainbow,
£21.99
sks-germany.com



Trouser clips
B'Twin, yellow
£1.99
decathlon.co.uk



Skirt guard
Hesling 28-5
Grid, £19.60
cyclobikes.co.uk



Rain poncho
B'Twin Cycling
Rain Poncho 900,
£29.99
decathlon.co.uk