

CYCLOPEDIA

Questions answered, subjects explained – Cyclopedia is your bimonthly cycling reference guide



E-cycles can keep cyclists riding

Left: Andy Catlin

Health

Stopping cycling

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&
A

Q In July I fell and broke my left hip and shoulder. My hip was repaired with intramedullary nailing of the femur, using a 23cm metal rod (referred to as a nail). The physiotherapist has said that I should give up cycling completely because if I fell on the side of the inflexible nail it would greatly damage the surrounding tissue. The physiotherapist is excellent but I would like to know if there might be other views about the need to give up cycling.

Richard Wadey

A Giving up cycling is an emotive topic, and one that we will nearly all need to address eventually. There are reasons to pause for a while to recover from illness or injury, and more permanent conditions such as yours, which make the risk of cycling and having a fall from a bike unacceptable.

Having a chronic condition that makes your limbs less strong, makes you breathless or makes your heart race will not necessarily put an end to cycling. Using an e-bike or riding an adapted trike may give you extra years of fun. Some folk will be strong and fit but have an uncontrolled health condition that puts them at risk of sudden seizures or collapse. Doctors will recommend that they desist until they are stable. Others will have an impairment of

Your Experts



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Retired GP
{Health}



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eyesight or a balance disorder that means an accident is more likely to happen.

In general, if you are advised not to drive a car then riding your bike is probably unwise as well.

Dr Kate Brodie

Technical

Stripped freewheel

Q My biggest mechanical dread – a stripped freewheel – happened to me on tour recently. It hadn't stripped completely; I managed to get it working well enough to reach a train station. Can anything be done to prevent such a failure? For example, is it prudent to fit a new freewheel after X miles or after exceptional miles in the rain? Are there any 'get you home' repairs?
John Thompson

A A 'stripped freewheel' usually means one that has stripped the thread on the hub. If this was a multiple freewheel or 'block', it would involve technology that predates the modern rear freehub with a cassette of sprockets. Alternatively, you may be touring on a single freewheel.

In either case, the freewheel screws onto a thread on the hub body. This thread can be subject to considerable force when riding with luggage and using low gears, as when touring. Steel hubs are less prone to a stripped thread than aluminium but can be hard to find. Careful installation of the freewheel may help. The threads should be cleaned thoroughly and the hub thread inspected for damage. It can be oiled to ease removal.

Avoid cross-threading at the start. The freewheel should be screwed home to a stop and then tightened using a chain wrench or gentle pressure on the pedals on first use. Stamping on the pedals with a barely tight freewheel is sure to over-stress the thread and hamper removal.

The freewheel itself may fail in numerous ways. If it is allowed to rust