

# Never Cycle Without a Helmet (& Other Tips for Safer Biking)



Wearing a helmet is the single most important thing you can do to prevent serious injury from bicycle accidents. Other injury-preventive measures include wearing gloves, choosing the right size bike, and riding on well-maintained roads. But wearing a helmet is still critical. Not just any helmet will do, however. Look for the following features.

- Outer layer or shell that is bright yellow, white, orange, or red (so motorists can see you more easily), and is constructed of hard plastic or polycarbonate.
- Waterproof finish.
- Stiff polystyrene lining.
- Securely attached nylon strap and fastener.
- A label signifying that the American Standards Institute or the Snell Memorial Foundation has certified the helmet as safe.

## ***Whatever your cycling style, don't sacrifice safety for thrills. To be sure your equipment is safe and reliable:***

- Choose a bike that's right for your size. When seated, you should be able to put one foot on the ground without leaning the bike to one side or the other.
- Brakes should be in good working order—that is, enabling you to stop within 15 feet while riding at 10 miles per hour.
- Check tires for worn spots, punctures, or other signs of wear. Fix or repair, as needed.

- By law, all bicycles must have red reflectors, visible for 500 feet, on the sides, rear, and pedals.
- The bicycle should have headlights.
- Rearview mirrors are optional, but helpful.

## ***Additional tips:***

- Obey all traffic laws, just as you would if you were driving a car. (Ride with traffic, not against it; observe traffic signs and signals; stay to the right; maintain a safe following distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you; and use hand signals for turning.)
- Look behind you before turning or changing lanes.
- Consider walking your bike across intersections not governed by traffic signals, especially if traffic is heavy.
- Whenever possible, choose routes over smooth pavement.
- Drive defensively, anticipating the actions of motorists, pedestrians, and other bikers.
- Keep your eyes on the road. Watch for potholes, parked cars, and children or animals entering your path.
- Pay attention. Don't listen to a portable radio or tape player while riding.
- Don't B.W.I.—bike while intoxicated. It's just as risky as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The above rules apply whether you're biking for exercise, sport, or transportation.