

## Planning your day- prepare ahead

The most important thing is to develop a routine, so you know what to expect and how to adjust to variables (time, weather, how you feel). Know what you need, where it is, what your schedule is, and what your options are.

### Well laid out...

Put out in advance all the things that you'll need for your commute, so you don't have to hunt for them: clothes and shoes, snacks, Kleenex, etc.

### The body needs...

**Water:** keep your bottle full - fill it when you get home if you like lukewarm; in the morning if you like it cool. In the hot weather add some ice cubes.

**Snack:** keep a snack handy (e.g.. a granola bar) for the occasion when you "run out of fuel"

### What are you doing after work?

If you're going out or working late, make sure you take your lights with you. It's a good idea to have some type of light on your bike or with you in case you get caught in the dark or rainy conditions.

Other plans? A game of tennis or doing the grocery shopping can all be accommodated if you plan ahead.

### Have options

Keep a **bus** schedule if you don't feel like riding or your bike has a flat. All busses have easy to load bike racks on them now.

**Call a cab** (riding regularly will save you more than enough money to cover this "luxury") Carry your **cellphone** and call for a pickup from family and friends. The more backups you have, the more comfortable you'll feel committing to your bike.

And paradoxically, the more you ride, the fewer times you'll feel the need to actually act on those alternative.

### Check the weather

Plan for you day according to the weather and light.

Cold or warm ? Rainy or dry? Daylight or darkness? It only takes a few minor adjustments to make sure you have all you need. The weather may affect your choice of routes. On high wind or heavy rain days, seaside routes might need an alternate. See the "Route Selection" sheet for more details.

### A place for everything and everything in its place.

**Use daily** - keep your regularly needed items in the same place every day (lock, panniers, helmet, etc)

**Just in case** - Keep "contingency" items accessible: jackets of varying warmth, rain gear, sunglasses, lights, spare batteries, etc

### When you arrive

Know where your bike and your cycling clothes (if you wear them) will be stored. Also, find out where you can hang up your wet riding gear if it rains.

### Home again

At the end of the day, check you bags (panniers, backpack, etc.) for items you need to put away: documents, wet clothes, food battery needing recharging etc.

### Well laid out

### The body needs...

### After work?

### Have options

### Check the weather

### A place for everything..

### When you arrive

### Home again

## Grooming

---

### **“Helmet Hair” and washing up**

#### **Showering and “Glowing”**

Many people who would like to cycle to work worry about how to make themselves presentable at work. How will they do without a shower?- and there aren't any showers at work anyway! What about helmet hair?- and makeup getting smudged? It all seems too problematic!

To refer to the outdated saying: “Horses sweat, men perspire and women glow”, if you don't want to, or are unable to have a shower at work, your goal is to arrive at work “glowing” so that the most you need is a bit of washing up. For those who want a workout, save it for the ride home, where a shower and cold drink await. Rushing is stressful and it really doesn't save much time in the big picture. Enjoy your ride - the flowers, the sights and the pleasantly energized feeling that develops along your commute. Of course, the more you ride, the more fit you become - the easier cycling to work becomes.

A simple washcloth, soap and towel is probably all you need. Finish off with a splash of cold water. Keep clothes in a plastic bag if there is nowhere to hang them up and take them home regularly to wash. If you wear make up, now is the time to put it on: the same goes for deodorant. Talcum powder can be used instead to absorb any residual “glowing”.

#### **“Helmet Hair”**

Many hairstyles, long hair or short, can be quickly spruced up upon arrival at work. One trick is a bit of re-wetting of the hair and /or the application of hair spray. (If you shower at home in the morning, don't dry your hair completely. You can keep a travel hair dryer and small spray water bottle at work for quick styling. Misting your hair with a light hairspray before putting on your helmet and then brushing your hair right after you take it off, should keep your hair from denting.

#### **Tools of the trade**

Brush and /or comb

Soap, washcloth (kept in a “Ziplock” )

Small towel

Misting bottle of hairspray or water, portable hair dryer

## Inspecting your bike for safe riding

---

Your bike should be checked and tuned by a professional mechanic once or twice a year, depending on how often you ride. There are over 25 bicycle shops in the Capital region who have the skilled staff you need to keep your bike safe and running smoothly. If you like playing mechanic, here are a few things you can do between tune-ups.

### Chain

Unlike the squeaky wheel getting the grease, your chain needs oil. A lightly oiled chain runs quietly and smoothly, increasing the amount of power transferred to your wheels and minimizing the risk of breakage.

### Wheels

Alright everybody, let's tighten up! Make sure your wheels are on tight - check the nuts or quick release to ensure the wheels are secured firmly to your frame. When you spin your wheels they shouldn't wobble if they do you may have a loose or broken spoke. Your bike store can sort this out for you.

### Handlebars

#### ***Staying on the straight and narrow***

To ensure your handlebars are tight, hold the front wheel between your knees. Turn the handlebars. If they move, the bolt that secures the stem to your fork is loose - look down at the stem ( the part that grips the handlebars). Tighten up the Allen head bolt on the heel of that stem to make sure your front wheel turns when you turn.

### Brakes

***Them's the brakes.*** Squeeze the lever. If you can squeeze 'em all the way to your handlebar, you don't have enough stopping power. See the little knurled and threaded "thingy" where the cable housing enters your brake lever? Twist it a few turns counterclockwise. Brake again. When you can squeeze no further than half the distance to your handlebars, your brakes are probably set up properly. Oh, and check the rubber on your brake shoes. Make sure it isn't worn down to the metal - bad medicine for your rim. Replace them if they are worn. Bikes are accessible technology. If you look at them and can't figure out how to change your brake shoes, take it to the shop for servicing. (Hint- in wet weather make sure you clean the grit off the tire rims, so that your breaks can do their job!)

### Tires "*Air Miles*"

Your bike's most important suspension and comfort system is all in the tires. Check that they are all pumped up regularly, use a pressure gauge if you have one. A pressure rating in pounds per square inch will be stenciled on the sidewall of your tire. Keep them inflated to that pressure. Nothing will give you a rougher ride or rob you of more power than mushy tires. Also make sure that the rubber isn't cracking. Tires will rot with time. There are many different types of tires suited for different riding conditions and terrain. Slicks may be good in dry weather, but not so much in the wet. Knobby tires are great off road, but create friction on pavement and can slow you down. Talk with your local bike store to determine which kind of tire suits your needs.

## On the road to comfort

---

### Five simple modifications for your commuting bike

Commuting can be quite comfortable. If it isn't, on the bike you are presently riding, there are a few options you might want to consider.

#### 1-Saddle

##### Saddle

Since most of your riding time is spent sitting on the saddle, it's good to find one that fits your body. Saddles are now ergonomically designed to fit almost any body type. Like shoes you may have to try a few before you find the right one. Look for a saddle that is shaped to your pelvis- wider and shorter for most women. Most bike shops can show you several models to suit your budget and biking needs. Remember just because it looks comfy doesn't make it so! Try them out! Often you won't know until you're riding at least 30 min. whether this is the seat for you.

#### 2-Tires

##### Tires

Investing in the right tires for your commute can make a huge difference over the miles. Many mountain bikes come with knobby tires that are great for riding off road or on trails. They are quite noisy on the road. All of the sound that you hear is energy lost to friction with the pavement. An inexpensive set of "slicks" will save you energy and time. Slicks are smooth tires that are better suited to travelling on smooth surfaces as they can be inflated higher and therefore have less rolling resistance compared to 'knobbies'. They also tend to handle better on corners. If your riding both on pavement and path you might want to consider a hybrid tire. (Ask your local bike store what is best for your commute!)

#### 3-Handlebars

##### Handlebars

Lower-back pain often means that handlebars are too far away, while upper arm or shoulder fatigue often means the handlebars are too close to you. Try raising or lowering the handlebars, or moving your seat forward or backward. You can also change to a shorter or longer handlebar stem. Don't raise your handlebars so high that less than two inches of your handlebar stem extends into the frame. If you have to raise your handlebars higher than the safe limit, get a longer stem. Rotate your handlebars so that they put even pressure across the palms of your hands without bending your wrists in a strange way.

#### 4-Fenders

##### Fenders

Fenders will help keep you clean and dry and are essential for the commuting bike. The best investment you can make for winter riding!!!

#### 5-Cargo Carriers

##### Cargo Carriers

Panniers (saddlebags for bikes), carrying rack or basket is essential for carrying items such as clothes, briefcases, books, etc. Backpacks aren't ideal as they can affect your balance, impede shoulder checking for traffic and make you hot and sweaty!

### When only the best will do... go for a new bike!

#### Or when only the best will do..go for a new bike

Parting with the old frame and getting a new bike designed for your commuting needs may be the best investment you will make for your health and well-being. If your not sure, test ride different bikes at a local shop to feel the difference.

## Choosing your cycling wardrobe

### Key concepts for commuter cycling

**The 'Onion' concept:** Use layers to regulate your body temperature-peel them away on warmer days, pile them on in colder weather.

**'No Sweat Zone':** Don't overdress- start off in a chill. You'll warm up quickly.

**Pace your commute:** Take it slow and arrive fresh and clean.

### Dress for Success

Clothes that ride well; Breathable fabrics; spandex, spandex blends, coolmax, etc. nothing dangling that can get caught in the chain.

Styles that work: shorts, cycling shorts under a shorter skirt, ankle strap for pants  
Keep extra clothes at work to change into: dress jacket, tie, skirt work shoes.

### Bike bits for clean commuting

Fenders and fender extensions, chain covers

### Cycling fashion

**You don't need an entire cycling wardrobe. Acquire the essentials over time.**

Clothes: Polypro tights; Gore-tex or weather appropriate jacket and rain pants- preferably breathable: Bike friendly shorts or long cycling tights.

Cycling shoes - something with a stiff sole and booties for wet weather;

Cycling gloves- full and short fingered, neoprene.

Cycling glasses to reduce glare and keep grit out of eyes. (Yellow lenses improve visibility in gray and overcast conditions.)

### Quick change artist

Is here a place at work to store/hang clothes? showers? Stock your workplace with a change of clothes once a week- Rubbermaid bins make a great tote.



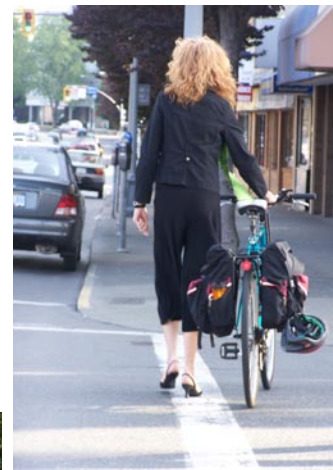
### Key concepts

### Dress for Success

### Bits for cleaning

### Cycling Fashion

### Quick change artist



---

## Bicycle parking/bicycle theft prevention



Downtown Victoria "U" Lock

Main options: Outdoor racks, rooms, bike lockers, bike parking at some bike stores.

### Racks: preferably out of the rain.

- Avoid hidden/low traffic areas that give potential thieves longer to work unnoticed
- Avoid 'wheel benders'- ground level racks that support the whole bike by one wheel
- Ditto for serpentine racks- the bike can slide (and scratch) easily on these

### Rooms/lockers: indoors is generally better protected from rain

- Limited access to other people (but keep in mind, you still need to protect your bike from others in the workplace) ask building management if they have a spare room indoors for storage
- Visiting a store or other business? Ask if you can bring your bike inside.

### Bike Store parking

- A few bike stores offer indoor secure parking for a nominal fee! It is dry and safe and if you need work done on your bike it can be done while you're at work!!

### Don't just lock it - lock it to something

Remember: what you lock it to is as important as what lock you use.

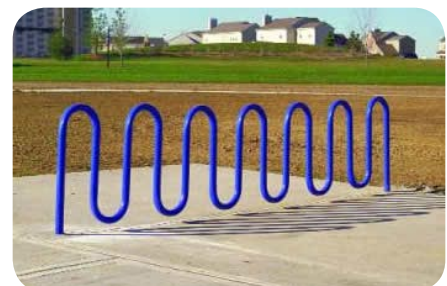


Covered Bike Parking UVic

- Don't lock it to a chain-link fence.
- Make sure it can't be lifted up and over what it's locked to
- Lock it twice: frame to bar and wheels to bar.
- Quick-release seat post? Take the seat with you , or have a bike shop put a regular boltclamp on it if you don't adjust the seat height often.
- Bike rack on the car? Lock the bike to it when leaving it and make sure your rack can't be easily removed from the vehicle
- Don't use quick release if you don't need it
- Use an old or 'non-flashy' bike when you're leaving it in the open
- Record your bike's serial number (located under the bottom bracket i.e., where the pedal cranks meet the bike) Make, model colour & Type (e.g. mountain bike) Men's/women's, speed (21,27 etc.)
- Engrave your driver's license number on the frame rims and seat post (prefaced by 'BCDL#')
- Place a 'marked for identification' sticker (available from the police dept.) in a visible place on the bike.



"CORA" Rack



Serpentine rack- best avoided

## Bicycle lighting - Hey cyclists, lighten up!

Cyclists need to ask themselves if they need a light to see where they are going, and/or a light to be more visible to others, for safety and common courtesy.

There are new high powered simple LED type lights that easily mount to the handlebar and seat post of the bike. Typically these lights are approximately \$25.00 for the pair.

If a rider needs a light to light their way for short periods, there are new high-powered LED lights that can “flash” as well as have a constant beam that will guide a rider through dark areas. However these lights are designed to be used for shorter periods of time in the “constant” beam mode. The rider who needs a high powered light for longer ride times in low light to all-dark areas, will need a light that can last the duration of that ride at least.

The earlier rechargeable battery systems were based on a simple lead acid battery. This battery needed to be charged after almost every use and its burn time was somewhat short. The more modern light systems are using a Nickel Cadmium type battery or better still a Lithium-Ion battery. The Lithium-Ion battery is extremely small and light weight and only slightly more expensive. There are many types on the market.

Avoid generator powered lights that turn “off” when the wheels are not turning. There are some new generator systems that store the charge and keep the lights on when a rider is at a standstill.

Lights that simply “dangle” to a bar are not directional enough for clear visibility of the path or to others. So make sure the light points in the direction you need.

The specific owners manual for the light will be the best guide for charging the light throughout the year and the best way to store it during the times it's not in use.

All lights need to be mounted in the most conspicuous spots on the bike as possible, keeping in mind baskets, panniers etc, may impede the vision of the light from the front or the rear.

Your local bicycle shops will be your best help in finding a light that both meets your specific requirements and budget.

How much is ***your*** life worth? **Lighten up and be safe!**

*The Motor Vehicle Act of British Columbia requires a cyclist to have a mounted front light visible from a minimum of 150 metres and a rear red light visible for a minimum 100 metres and a rear reflector, visible for a minimum of 100 metres.*

*Over 80% of all collisions happen in front of the cyclist and the #1 reason drivers give is:*

*“I didn't/couldn't see them”*



**Front white light for lighting your way**



**Red back light and reflector- so you are visible to others**

---

# bike to work

# TIPS



Planning your day  
Grooming  
Bike locks, parking, lighting  
Cycling wardrobe  
Bicycle maintenance

©2006 Bike to Work Victoria

