

# Cyclist's Guide

NAME: .....

LEVEL 1




Cycling Scotland





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# Bikeability Scotland

**Bikeability Scotland is a cycle training scheme designed to help you get the skills and confidence to ride your bike more and enable you to cycle independently in the future. There are three levels of Bikeability Scotland training, and this is the first.**

Level 1 will give you the skills that are an important part of cycling. This means that when you move to level 2 you will already be able to ride in a straight line, make the bike go where you want it to go, and be able to use the gears and brakes confidently.

After completing Bikeability Scotland level 1, you should be able to do the following:

- **Carry out a simple bike check.**
- **Get on and off your bike without help.**
- **Start off and pedal without help.**
- **Stop without help.**
- **Ride along without help for roughly one minute or more.**
- **Make the bike go where you want.**
- **Use your gears correctly (if the bike has gears).**
- **Stop quickly while still keeping control of your bike.**
- **Move your bike safely to avoid objects.**
- **Look all around, including behind, without wobbling.**
- **Signal right and left.**
- **Share space with pedestrians and cyclists.**
- **Demonstrate understanding of safety equipment and clothing.**

Your assessors will award a traffic-light score for each of these areas.

- Green** – Very well done! You have shown a high level of understanding of level 1 skills. You should practise your skills to keep up this standard. Keep cycling!
- Amber** – Well done! You have progressed well with only some mistakes. With help from an adult, you should read the assessor's comments (on the back of your certificate) and try to improve on the things the assessor has mentioned.
- Red** – Good effort! You have shown some progress but have not yet managed to achieve all the level 1 skills. With help from an adult, you will need more training in the areas the assessor has noted. Keep practising!



# Bike checks

It is important that your bike is safe to ride and works correctly. If you find anything wrong ask an adult to get it fixed.

## How to M check your bike

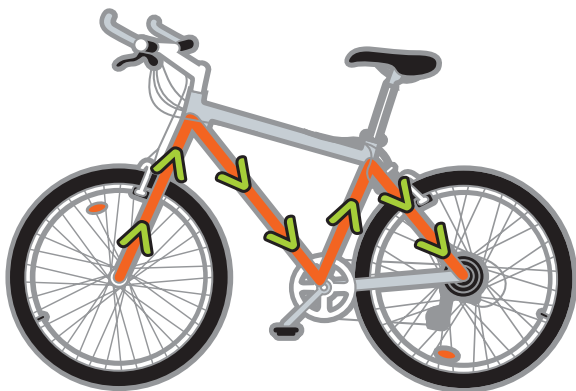
It is best to follow a routine. Some people do an M check.

Here's how to do an M check:

- **Start with the front wheel.**
- **Move up to the handlebars.**
- **Move down to the pedals and chain set.**
- **Move up to the saddle and seatpost.**
- **Move down to the rear wheel.**



Here is what to look for in more detail:







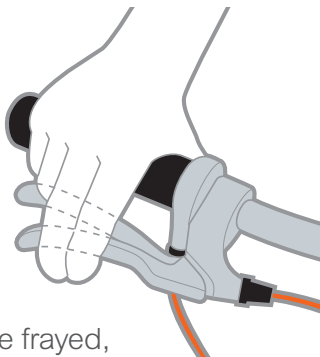
# Front wheel

## Look at the tyre.

- Make sure the wheel isn't loose – make sure the quick release axle or nuts and bolts are tight.
- There shouldn't be any bald, worn or cracked patches.
- Make sure there's nothing stuck in the tyre, and there aren't any broken or damaged spokes.
- Is the tyre pumped up properly? It should feel firm when you squeeze it.
- When you spin the wheel, the brakes shouldn't stick.

# Handlebars

- Put the front wheel between your knees and clamp it tight, like in the picture.
- Try to turn the handlebars side to side – they should be nice and tight and not twist.
- Check that the bar-end plugs are still there.

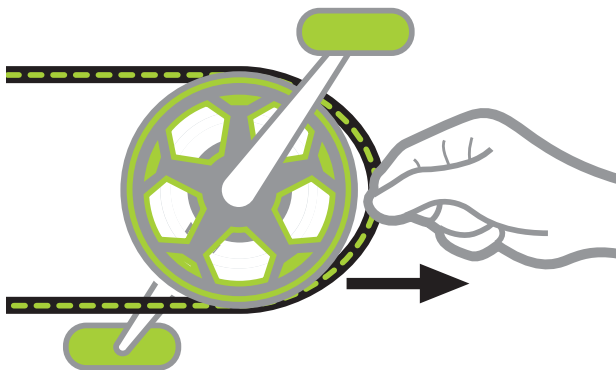


# Brakes

- Do the brakes work?
- The cables shouldn't be frayed, rusty or broken.
- Make sure that the brake blocks aren't worn, and that they're in line with the rims.

# Pedals and chain

- ▶ Do the pedals spin freely?
- ▶ Does the chain go round smoothly?
- ▶ Make sure the chain isn't rusty – it should be oiled (but not too much!) to make it easier to pedal and change gear.



# Saddle and seatpost

- Check that the seatpost has not been raised above the safety mark.
- Check that the saddle is not loose.
- Saddle height: when sitting on the saddle, your leg should be almost straight when the ball of your foot is at the lowest pedal position, as in the picture.
- If you feel unsafe, ride with the saddle a little lower until you feel more confident.



# Back wheel

- Check this wheel in the same way that you checked the front one.
- Check that the gears work.

# Kitting yourself out

## Helmet

### Check that:

- It fits snugly but is not too tight. A good helmet will have an adjuster at the back.
- It sits level just above the eyebrows.
- The straps are tight, with just enough room for two fingers under the chinstrap.



## Clothing

- Make sure you don't have any loose shoelaces or flapping trouser legs.
- Check that you don't have any other loose clothing that could catch in the chain or wheels and cause you injury.



# Getting going

## Balance and braking

Get an adult to help you remove any stabilisers. You may also want to remove the pedals too if they get in the way. Remember to put on your helmet. Check your clothing to make sure nothing is going to get caught in the chain or the wheels! Find a flat area with a tarmac or concrete surface. Sit on the bike and practise squeezing the brake levers.

**Try walking the bike forward while sitting with a leg either side of the saddle. Then use the brakes to slow down and stop. Remember to squeeze the brake levers gently.**



When you feel confident, try 'scootering' the bike (using your feet to move yourself forward). Try keeping both feet off the ground once you have pushed off. You are now starting to balance the bike. Keep practising with the brakes.



## Get pedalling

Get an adult to help you put your pedals back on, if you had them removed. Find an area with a downhill gentle slope and no cars, cyclists, people (or pets!) that you might bump into.

**Firstly, hold the handlebars with both brakes on and sit with a leg either side of the bike. Push off with both feet, letting go of the brakes as you do so. This time try to put your feet on the pedals.**

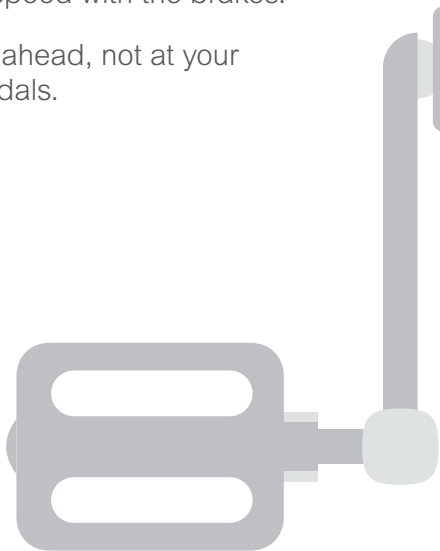




If you have difficulty finding the pedals with your feet, try placing your right foot on the pedal as shown and pushing down on it to get going. This foot position is called the 'pedal ready' or '2 o'clock' position.

Once you have managed to get your feet onto the pedals, try pedalling. You are now cycling!

- When you feel confident, try going a little faster. It will make it easier to balance the bike.
- Control your speed with the brakes.
- Keep looking ahead, not at your feet or the pedals.



# Using your brakes

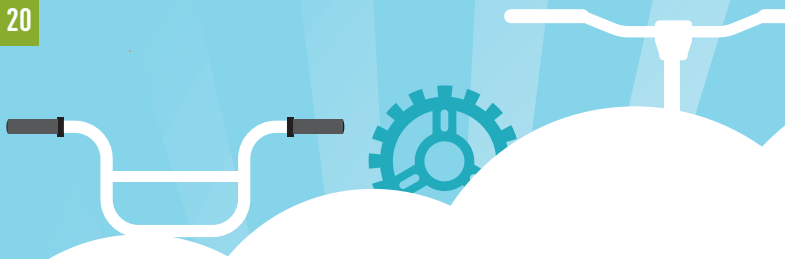
**Using your brakes safely is one of the most important skills to learn.**

- Start by braking from a seated position.
- Apply both brakes gently and smoothly.
- Keep your arms quite straight and push back from the handlebars.
- Allow your bottom to slide to the back of the saddle.
- Come to a complete stop.



Try this several times, going a little faster each time before using the brakes. The faster you go, the more you will have to push back from the handlebars. When going faster or downhill, try to keep two fingers covering the brakes in case you need to stop quickly.





# Emergency stop

Once you have practised stopping normally, practise an emergency stop. To practise an emergency stop, cycle along with two fingers from each hand resting on the brakes, get someone to shout 'stop', squeeze both brakes together and move your weight back on the saddle.



# Getting on and off your bike

It is better to lean your bike against a wall or fence than to lay it down on the ground. It is easy for bikes to get damaged when they are laid on the ground. They take up quite a big space, especially if there are a few of them. This can block paths and pavements, so passers-by might not be able to get past. When you lean a bike against a wall or fence, place it so that the rear wheel and the end of the handlebars are in contact with the wall.

# Getting on and getting going

- › Squeeze the brakes with both hands until you are ready to go.
- › Stand with the bike on your right.
- › Swing your right leg over the bike and stand with a leg either side of it.
- › Put your right foot on the pedal and move the pedal to the 'pedal ready' position.



**Note that the rider's right foot is in the 'pedal ready' or '2 o'clock' position.**

- Keep your left foot on the ground.
- Check all around to see that it is safe to set off.
- Make a final check over your right shoulder.
- Push down firmly on the right pedal, lift your bottom onto the saddle and put your left foot on the pedal.



# Stopping and getting off

- Check that it is safe to stop (look over your right shoulder).
- Use your brakes to slow down.
- Don't use your foot as a brake.
- As you come to a stop, slide forward off the saddle and put your left foot on the ground.
- With the weight on your left foot, swing your right leg over the bike and down to the ground.
- If you are stopping without getting off, put the right pedal into the 'pedal ready' position.



## Why do I put my left foot down?

When you move on to riding on the road it is safest to put your left foot down as you will usually be leaning towards the pavement. This is a good habit to get into now.





If you do have to lie the bike on the ground, lay it on the left side so that the gears and chain are facing upwards. This helps to avoid damage to the gears. When you pick up your bike, always bend your knees so you don't hurt your back.

This way  
it doesn't  
damage my  
gears.



# Pedalling

**This section will help you to improve your pedalling.**

- Saddle height is very important. If your saddle is too low, you cannot use all the muscles in your legs to power the pedal stroke. If it's too high, your body will rock uncomfortably from side to side. Adjust the saddle so that when your leg is at the bottom of the pedal stroke, your leg is almost straight.
- Remember, if you are not a confident rider you may have to ride in a slightly lower position until your skills improve, but remember to adjust your saddle once you are more confident and continue to adjust it often as you grow.



The best position to pedal is with the ball of your foot (just behind your toes). Try to avoid using your heel or arch, because this will make it harder to pedal and will make you more tired.

**It's better when you pedal with the ball of the foot**



**Try to think of pedalling in circles**

# Balance and control

To have good control, you must be able to ride in a straight line. You need to be able to look over either shoulder without straying from your course, and have the confidence to steer with one hand while giving a signal with the other.



**You need to be able to ride with one hand on the handlebars. One way of practising these two skills is learning to signal.**

# Signalling

When cycling you need to be able to look all around you. You also need to be able to ride with one hand on the handlebars. One way of practicing these two skills is learning to signal.

- Look over your right shoulder to check it is safe to turn.
- Practise signalling right:
  - hold out your right arm straight from your shoulder;
  - put the palm of your hand facing forward, with your fingers straight;
  - hold the signal for three seconds (counting one elephant, two elephant...).
- Put your hand back on the bars and use the brakes if necessary.
- If you are more confident signalling on one side, practise more on your weaker side.

Once you have mastered one side, try doing the other.

# Changing gear

## Using your gears

There are two main types of gear changer:

- twist grips
- levers (sometimes known as trigger shifters).

Your gears are there to make pedalling harder or easier. You should use them to keep your legs spinning at a comfortable speed – not too fast but not too slow. When you have to pedal uphill you will want an easier gear that makes your legs spin a bit faster. When you are going downhill you will want a harder gear.

## Rear gears

The gear changer on the right of your handlebars will work the gears on the rear and you will probably use these the most. This is because these gears make little changes to how easy or hard it is to pedal.



## Front gears

The gear changer on the left of your handlebars will control the gears on the front. These gears make big changes to how hard or easy it is to pedal and you might not use these as much.

## Time for some practice!

- Find a flat place to ride your bike and start riding around.
- As you ride along, start to change gears with your right hand. As you change them it will get harder or easier to pedal, depending on which way you change them.
- When you reach the end of your gears, start to change them the other way. Keep using your right hand and remember to keep pedalling all the time.





- When you are happy using your rear gears change them back to a gear that is not too hard but not too easy. Now, keep riding and use your left hand to change gears. Remember to keep pedalling so the gear changes smoothly.
- When you are used to using both gears, find somewhere to ride that isn't flat. Ride around practising how to use your gears to make pedalling up and downhill easy to do.

**Remember, it's important to keep turning your pedals as you change gear.**



# Sharing paths with others

When you're on your bike, you need to watch for pedestrians and others who may be using the path too.

- › Give clear warnings that you are behind people – you can ring your bell to let them know you're there, or say 'hello' loudly.
- › Slow down near people and animals.
- › Slow down when near any junctions with traffic.
- › Thank people if they move to let you past.
- › Take care when pushing your bike along a path, and remember not to leave your bike lying on the pavement as this can be a danger to others.

# What's next?

Here is a list of useful contacts where you can find out more about cycling.

## Cycling Scotland

Cycling Scotland

24 Blythswood Square, Glasgow G3 4BG

Phone: 0141 229 5350

[www.cycling.scot](http://www.cycling.scot)

[www.bikeability.scot](http://www.bikeability.scot)

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**Ask your teacher or instructor about these other great Cycling Scotland programmes:**

**Cycle Friendly School Award** – an award for schools which encourage and promote cycling for staff and pupils.

[www.cyclefriendlyschool.org](http://www.cyclefriendlyschool.org)

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**Go Mountain Bike** – a mountain bike personal awards scheme.

[www.gomtb.org.uk](http://www.gomtb.org.uk)

# What's next?

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Sustrans

Rosebery House

9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

Phone: 0131 539 8122

**[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)**

**[www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk)**

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Scottish Cycling

Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome Emirates Arena

1000 London Road,

Glasgow G40 3HY

Phone: 0141 554 6021

**[www.scottishcycling.org.uk](http://www.scottishcycling.org.uk)**





UK's National Cyclists' Organisation  
[www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)

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Transport Scotland – promoting more environmentally-friendly travel choices  
[www.chooseanotherway.com/travel-planning-tools.php](http://www.chooseanotherway.com/travel-planning-tools.php)

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Road Safety Scotland  
Pentland House  
47 Robb's Loan  
Edinburgh EH14 1TY  
[www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk](http://www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk)

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Education Scotland  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston  
EH54 6GA  
**[www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk)**

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# Notes





**Cycling Scotland**

24 Blythswood Square

Glasgow

G2 4BG

0141 229 5350

[www.cycling.scot](http://www.cycling.scot)

[www.bikeability.scot](http://www.bikeability.scot)



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