

# Cycle smartly

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(HealthDay)—Bicycling outdoors can feel more like fun than the high-quality aerobic activity it is. And while you may be tempted to dust off your old two-wheeler, you might want to consider a new one.

Innovations include step-through bikes with a low, or no, top tube (cross bar), high-rise handlebars for better posture, wider tires for a smoother ride and even extra padding on the seat.

For safety as well as comfort, invest in cycling clothes. Choose a neon color with reflective material so you'll be visible to [drivers](#), and look for high-tech fibers that wick away sweat. You might like the cushioning of bike shorts with built-in padding.

But don't forget the most important piece of equipment—a properly fitted helmet. Harvard Health also recommends staying hydrated and avoiding clips to keep your feet on the pedals, which may make injuries worse if you fall.

Bike on recreational paths when you can. A great resource for discovering new locales is the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#).

If, on the other hand, you're biking for your commute, stay aware of your surroundings—even in areas with dedicated bike lanes. That means don't lose yourself in music. According to a University of California, San Francisco study, 65 percent of bike injuries happen on city streets.

Steer clear of all trucks, and never ride on their right where you could be in the driver's blind spot. Also, avoid riding too close to parked cars—many cyclists have been unintentionally hit by drivers opening their car door.

Practice defensive cycling just as you do defensive driving when behind the wheel of your car. Use hand signals to let others, including pedestrians, know when you're going to turn. By following the same rules of the road that drivers do, you can have a safe and enjoyable ride.

**More information:** For more on bicycling, visit

[target="\\_new">Harvard Health.](#)

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