

DR BIKE'S HOW TO HEALTHY PRESCRIPTION



CYCLE FRIENDLY SCOTLAND
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EXERCISE ON THE SLY

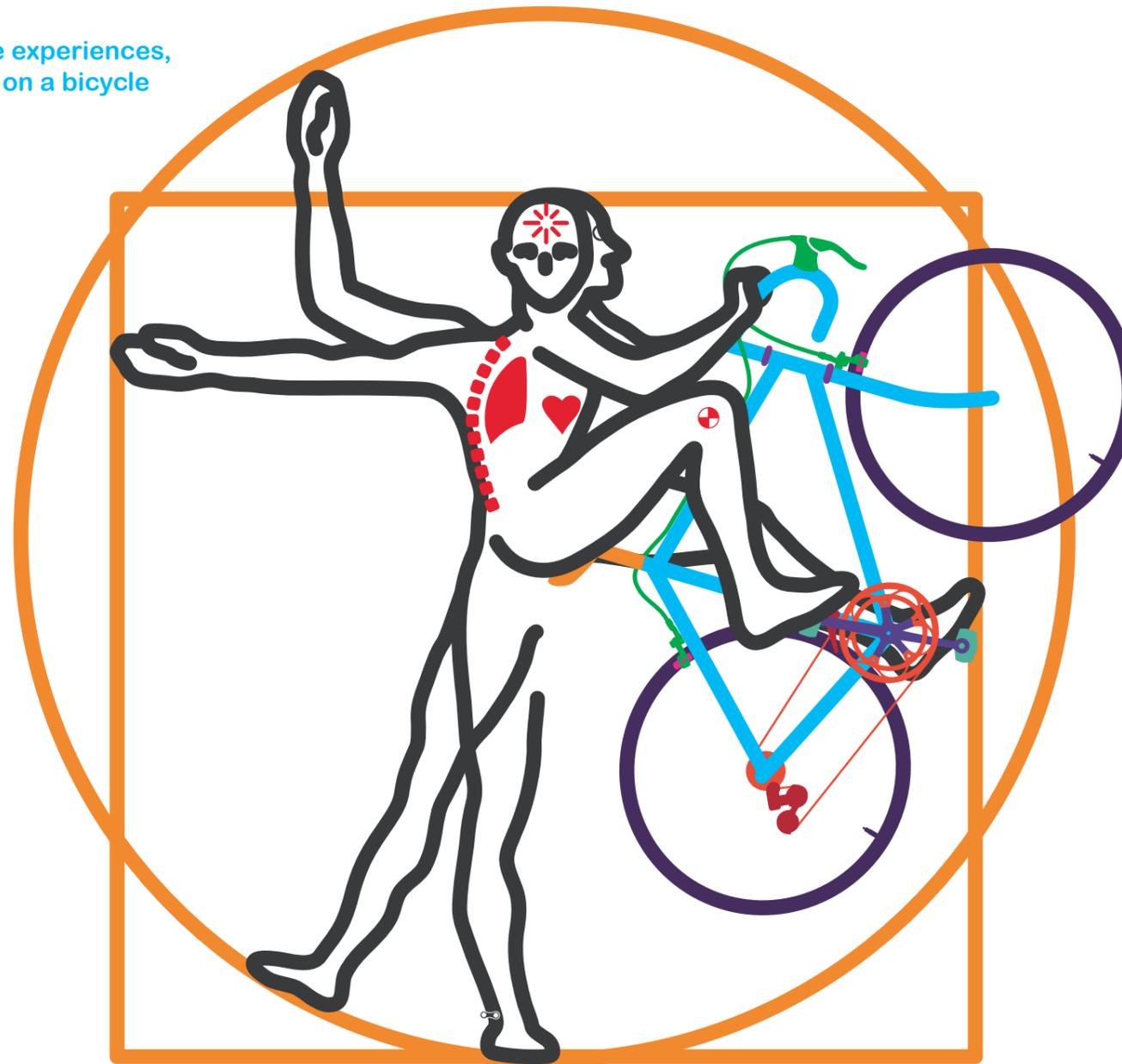
Cycling is one of the easiest ways to fit exercise into your daily routine: it saves you money, gets you fit and helps the environment.

Cycling is not a technically demanding skill to learn and is a low-impact type of exercise.

Cycling is easier on your joints than running or other high-impact aerobic activities. But it helps you get into shape. To build your cardiovascular fitness on the bike ride for at least 150 minutes every week and follow the Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines for Physical Activity.

"I really don't like the gym. I like experiences, so I take any chance I get to go on a bicycle or on a hike."

— Blake Lively



WEIGHT LOSS

Cycling is a good way to control or reduce weight, as it raises your metabolic rate, builds muscle and burns body fat. If you're trying to lose weight, cycling must be combined with a healthy diet. Cycling is a comfortable form of exercise and you can change the duration and intensity, it can be built up slowly and varied to suit you. Research suggests you should be burning at least about 2,000 calories a week through exercise. Steady cycling burns about 300 calories per hour. If you cycle twice a day, the calories burnt soon add up. A half-hour bike ride every day will burn nearly five kilograms of fat over a year. Cycling has the added benefit of ramping up your metabolism, even after the ride is over.

GOOD FOR YOUR HEAD

Mental health conditions such as depression, stress and anxiety can be reduced by regular bike riding. This is due to the effects of the exercise itself producing endorphins and because of the enjoyment that riding a bike can bring.

LIVE LONGER

Cycling is a great way to increase your longevity, as cycling regularly has been associated with increased 'life-years', even when adjusted for risks of injury through cycling. A study of 30,640 people living in Copenhagen showed that people who did not cycle to work were 39% more likely to die during the 15-year study. The health benefits of cycling outweigh the injury risks by between 13:1 and 415:1, according to studies. The figure that is most often quoted - and endorsed by the UK Government - is 20:1 (life years gained due to the benefits of cycling v the life-years lost through injuries). People who cycle regularly in mid-adulthood typically enjoy a level of fitness equivalent to someone 10 years younger and their life expectancy is two years above the average.

GOOD FOR YOUR HEART

Cardiovascular diseases include stroke, high blood pressure and heart attack. Regular cycling stimulates and improves your heart, lungs and circulation, reducing your risk of cardiovascular diseases. Cycling strengthens your heart muscles, lowers resting pulse and reduces blood fat levels.

GOOD FOR YOUR BONES

Cycling improves strength, balance and coordination. It may also help to prevent falls and fractures. Riding a bike is an ideal form of exercise if you have osteoarthritis, because it is a low-impact exercise that places little stress on joints. Around 70% of body weight goes through the saddle and handlebars instead of through your ankles. The bigger you are, the more important that will be. Cycling does not specifically help osteoporosis (bone-thinning disease) because it is not weight-bearing exercise.

DIABETES

The rate of type II maturity onset diabetes is dramatically increasing and is a serious public health concern. Lack of physical activity is thought to be a major reason why people develop this condition. Large-scale research in Finland found that people who cycled for more than 30 minutes per day had a 40 per cent lower risk of developing diabetes. Without action, 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children will be obese by 2050 in the UK - and cost the NHS £10 billion per annum.

CANCER

Many researchers have studied the relationship between exercise and cancer, especially colon and breast cancer. Research has shown that if you cycle, the chance of bowel cancer is reduced. Some evidence suggests that regular cycling reduces the risk of breast cancer by inducing the immune system. There is no evidence to suggest prostate cancer is linked to cycling.



DR BIKE

**DR BIKE'S
HEALTHY PRESCRIPTION
& 4 SEASON CYCLING**

Written by Prof. Chris Oliver, PAHRC University of Edinburgh.



DR BIKE'S HOW TO 4 SEASON CYCLING

SEASONS

All seasons are good to ride in - bikes aren't just for summer, and winter playgrounds don't have to be about skis.

LIGHTS

It is a legal requirement to use front (white) and rear (red) lights after dusk. In the UK flashing lights are permitted. Rechargeable LED lights are more cost-effective in the long run, and it can be a good idea to have a pair cheap of 'emergency lights' in case your batteries or your friends' die out on a ride.

MUDGUARDS

Are more about keeping you dry than clean. The front wheel can spray your feet with water, and wet feet get cold much faster. Mudguards can be a crucial piece of kit, especially in autumn and winter.

CLOTHES

Most sports or 'active' clothing is designed to carry sweat away from your skin and dry quickly. Cotton tends to get clingy and can feel hot. Wool and some synthetic fibres are more comfortable to ride in.

LAYERING

Keeping to thin layers is especially important in colder months. Don't head out on a long ride in a coat, you will be uncomfortable. A thermal baselayer, a mid layer and a shell to keep the wind out is usually all you need when you are moving. A water-proof layer can be handy for when you stop, to keep from getting a chill.

WATERPROOFS

Water-resistant clothing is sufficient for most showers, and breathable membrane waterproofs are most comfortable for long exposure. You can get good quality and inexpensive, light-weight "stuffable" waterproofs from discount shops like Aldi, Lidl and Decathlon. Stuffable means they can be stuffed into a pocket or saddle bag.

PLASTIC BAGS

A simple carrier bag (or two) can be used as waterproof socks, gloves (if your chain is dropped) and a seat on wet ground. A Ziploc® can keep your phone dry.

WEATHER

Forecasts can be misleading, so always prepare for a weather change. Winter forecasts usually offer advice on road conditions. Ice and black ice warnings are worth paying attention to. When the temperature is below freezing, remember that heavily used roads will be gritted and cleared more regularly than pavements and paths, so they will always be safer for cycling.

Mobile weather apps will also give you sunrise and sunset times, which can be important.

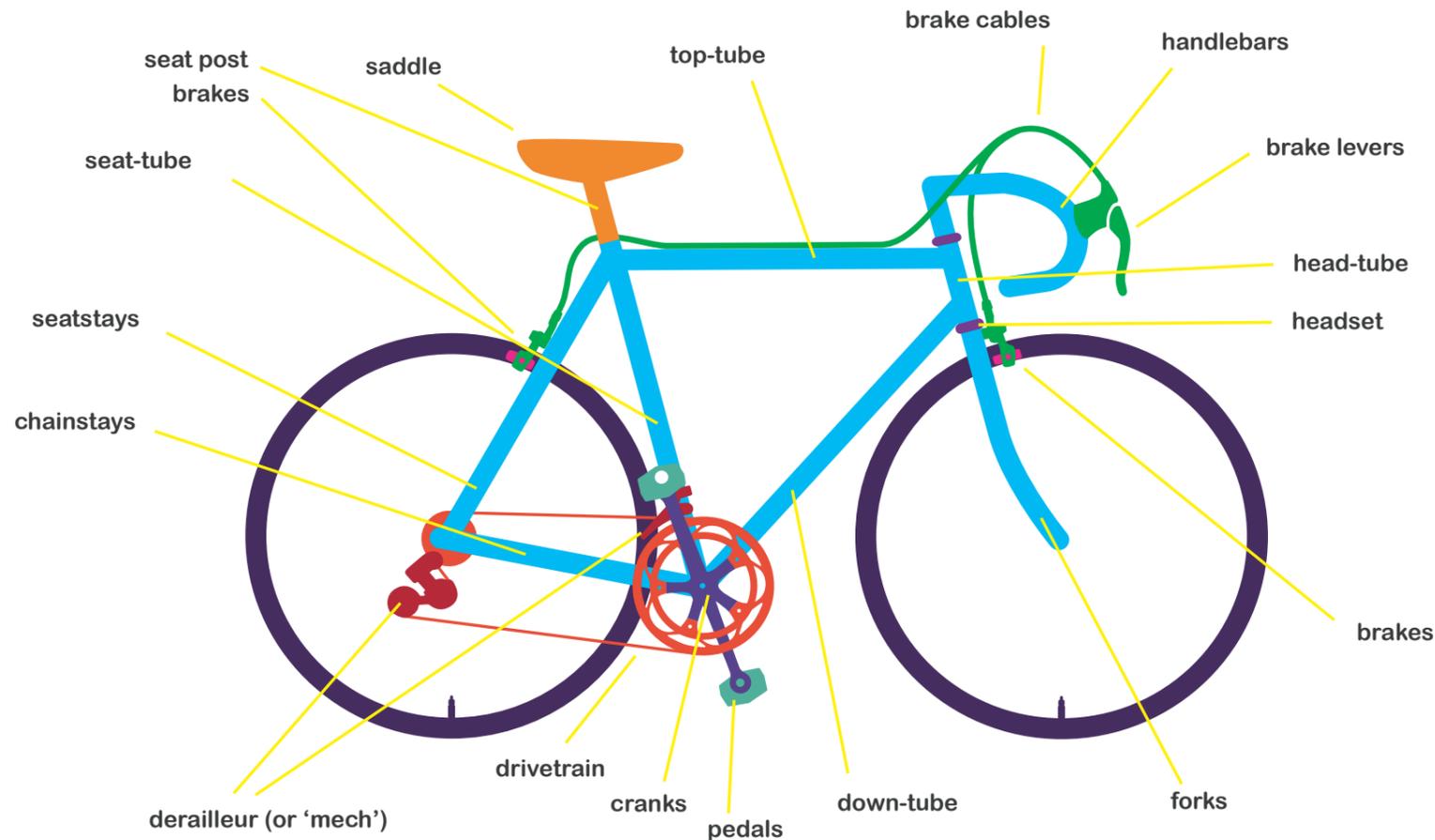
If you are out in remote parts of the country it is advisable that you take an emergency shelter like a bivi bag, in case you get stuck. These can be bought from most outdoors suppliers, weigh under 300g and can cost less than a fiver.

WASHING

The more often you clean your bike, the easier it is. Don't use high pressure water or corrosive/abrasive cleaners. Bike specific cleaning products are readily available, but warm water, a soft sponge or paint brush and dish washing soap work well most of the time.

Displace water from the chain and mechs with a spray lube after washing your bike, avoiding rims & brakes. Lube your chain when its dry.

In winter it is important to wash your bike more often as the salt and grit on the roads will accelerate wear and tear of most parts of your bike. As soon as salt hits the roads, oil your chain more than once a week, and clean your bike whenever possible.



EATING

Dr Bike always recommends packing emergency food. Not a chocolatey treat - emergency fuel to make sure you can make it home. If you deplete the glycogen stores in your muscles you can 'bonk', which feels like you are hitting a wall as your muscles struggle to move.

DRINKING

Staying hydrated during exercise is important. Professional cyclists drink around 500ml per hour. If you get headaches during or after a ride, try adding electrolytes to your water.

TOOLS

Leaving the safety-net of a taxi ride home comes with the need for emergency tools. Most of the time a cycling multi-tool, hand pump, spare tube and a puncture repair kit will get you out of trouble. A zip-tie or two is also a good idea.

LOCKS

Avoid leaving your bike locked up outside for long periods of time, and when you do lock it, make sure your lock is not what thieves call a "three second lock". Most cable locks can be cut in seconds, U-locks (or D-locks) are hard to get through. Many regular commuters leave their heavy lock attached to the rail they park up against at work so they don't have to carry it with them daily.

LUBRICANTS

Bicycle specific chain lube is an absolute must. If you live in a dry climate, dry-lube (wax) is excellent, but if it rains a lot, then you are best using a wet-lube (oil).

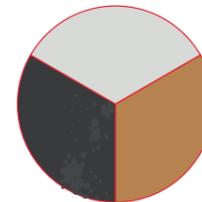
WD-40 is not a good lubricant, but it is good at displacing water and dissolving waxy grease, so it can help if your gear shifter is gummed up. A better lubricant for the inside of cable outers and derailer pivot points is GT85, which contains Teflon®, a dry lubricant. To keep ball bearings running smooth you will need grease: you can purchase small tubes of bicycle specific grease of varying brands and with different qualities. A general purpose grease will do for most applications.

MORE ADVICE

There are several bicycle charities which run Fix Your Own Bike sessions where you have access to new and used parts, experienced volunteers and mechanics to provide you with advice and instruction. Cycling Scotland's free Essential Cycling Skills mobile app is full of advice for new or returning cyclists.

Some shops also provide courses, from how to fix a puncture to full qualifications.

Online www.sheldonbrown.com is a resource that most mechanics know. Youtube has hundreds of videos with tutorials from Global Cycling Network, ParkTool and many bike shops.



If your chain is rusty or black and tattoos your calf and trousers then it needs a clean! A dirty chain will slow you down and make gear shifting slower.

An average cyclist should be able to get around 1000 miles' use out of a chain, if kept oiled and clean. If you replace it before it is too worn, you should get around 3 chains' use out of the sprockets (Chainrings and Cassette).