**DR BIKE’S HOW TO RIDE SAFELY**

**STAY CLEAR OF BLIND SPOTS**
Blind spots are a fact. All road users have areas they cannot see. Don’t pass inside (under-take) a bus or lorry near a junction, not even on a cycle path. Make sure you are well in front of large vehicles if there is a chance that they might be turning left (and into you). A left-turning bus or lorry is a great danger to cyclists, so given the choice, avoid putting yourself in the danger zone: it will only cost you a few seconds of time to stay behind that lorry.

**FILTERING**
Filtering though standing traffic is one of the perks of riding a bike in town, but don’t be reckless, filtering needs to be safe, so take it slow, watch out for pedestrians and be aware of your surroundings.

**NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**
Using the road is about sharing the road with other people, and if you are nice about it, people will be nice back. Make eye contact, and if someone lets you out, then wave in thanks, or give them a thumbs-up. Once you start doing this, you will notice that van and bus drivers do this all the time.

**ACT CAR: TAKE THE LANE**
As a road vehicle, you should behave like a car, most of the time. So if you are making a manoeuvre which requires you to cross over traffic, it is safest for you to ‘take the lane’ (ride in the middle) BEFORE you put yourself at risk. This can be done safely if you are able to ride at the same speed as the traffic. Indicate your intended manoeuvres clearly to other road users and try not to get angry if someone else makes a mistake. We all make mistakes, it’s human.

**BE VISIBLE AND PREDICTABLE**
This doesn’t mean you have to wear hi-vis and cover yourself in lights. Ride like a motorist, don’t hide, dip in and out of traffic or tailgate. Don’t come up the inside of moving traffic unless you have a decent cycle or bus lane to keep you safe. Indicate your intended manoeuvres clearly to other road users and try not to get angry if someone else makes a mistake.

**ACT CAR: BE TREATED LIKE CAR**
As a road vehicle, you should behave like a car, most of the time. So if you are making a manoeuvre which requires you to cross over traffic, it is safest for you to ‘take the lane’ (ride in the middle) BEFORE you put yourself at risk. This can be done safely if you are able to ride at the same speed as the traffic. Indicate your intended manoeuvres clearly to other road users and try not to get angry if someone else makes a mistake. We all make mistakes, it’s human.

**THE DOOR ZONE**
When you are getting out of a car, it is hard to see a cyclist, and when you are riding a bike, it is not always easy to see if someone is in a car. Just be aware, doors do open (and people do park on yellow lines and in cycle lanes, constantly). One of the greatest hazards to urban cycling is not the speed of traffic, but rather the presence of parked cars. The danger of being “doored” by a careless person opening a car-door can be reduced by riding at arm’s length from parked cars and keeping an eye on whether there are people in the cars you pass.

**DON’T HUG THE KERB**
Cycle lanes are often right next to the kerb, and cycling near the shoulder makes it easier for cars to pass you. This also puts you in a risk of hitting broken glass, drain holes, and the majority of potholes. Being near the kerb also makes your position less visible to cars, and gives you less ‘wobble room’ if a car passes too close, or you need to avoid a hole in the road. Riding wide on narrow roads and pinch points (traffic islands and pedestrian crossings) is essential, as it forces cars to stay behind you.

**CYCLE LANES**
Don’t assume that cycle lanes are the safest place to be at all times. They are often riddled with obstacles including drains, broken glass and potholes, as well as parked cars. Beware of pedestrians stepping into cycle lanes too.

**WATER**
Water plays a big part in British weather.

Water will increase your braking distance, and remember that it will do the same to all other road vehicles!

Rain will also reduce visibility, so if it is raining, don’t hide from traffic near the edge of the road, and if cars have their lights on, it can’t hurt for you to put yours on too.

**PRACTICE**
Try your route at quiet times - don’t traumatisise yourself with rush-hour!
Cycling Scotland’s free Essential Cycling Skills mobile app is full of advice for new or returning cyclists.

**THE BIKE BOX (Advance Stop Line)**
Bike boxes are not a safe haven. They are great but the difficulty in getting to them safely can outweigh their benefits. Though it is an offence for any motor vehicle stop in them, motorbikes regularly use them and you will often find cars in them too. Getting to the bike box can also be dangerous (if filtering and traffic starts moving).

When you are in the bike box, you often have the chance to get across a junction before traffic and you are in front of the exhaust fumes of waiting traffic.
“When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking.”

— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

**REM O V I N G PEDALS**

Using a 15mm spanner, position it at 12 O’Clock and move it towards the back wheel (the left side is a left-hand thread). When putting them back on make sure you put the right pedal on the right side (there is often an L and R on the pedal, near the thread, to help with this), and be careful to not force anything. They don’t need to be super-tight, and it is easy to cross-thread the cranks.

**WHERE?**

Find a quiet bit of grass, on a very slight incline.

**BRAKES**

Don’t hold on with a death-grip.

**WHERE?**

Grass is softer than tarmac. Gravel is uneven and slippery. Choose a gentle hill or slope.

**SADDLE HEIGHT**

To begin, set the saddle so that you can touch the ground comfortably with both feet. Take off the pedals (see illustration). Tuck trousers into socks, and your laces into your shoes.

**RELAX**

Don’t clutch the brakes with a death-grip. Relax your arms and shoulders.

**WALK**

Walk the bike down the hill, sitting on the saddle. Don’t be a hero, do it a few times.

**PADDLING**

Use your bike like a sit-down scooter or a hobby-horse with wheels!

**PEDALS**

Take the pedals off (see illustration)

**FIND YOUR FEET**

Teach them where the pedals are, until you can put your feet on them with your eyes closed.

**THE WORLD IS YOUR CYCLEPATH!**

**SADDLE**

Lower it so you can easily touch the ground.

**BRACKES**

As you gain confidence, your saddle will need to be raised, for comfort and efficiency.

**ELEPHANTS**

Glide further and further with each step, until you glide along for 12 elephants

**PADDLE**

Paddle with your feet, both at a time. Pretend you are sitting on a scooter, or kicking on an office-chair. Do this a few times.

**FEET**

Find something solid to hold onto - sitting on the saddle, practice placing your feet on the pedals, then back on the ground. Do this until you can do it without looking down.

**START**

On a quiet road or an empty car-park with no hill, put your strong foot on a pedal which is pointed forwards in the 2 o’clock position. Relax. Push: this will give you enough momentum to put your other foot on its pedal. Don’t rush things. You might hit your shin off your pedal, so be gentle.

**PEDAL**

Pedal backwards. You might need to shift gears so your chain is in the middle of the cassette (gears at the back). Remember that pedalling is a circular movement - not like stomping up stairs.

**COAST**

Pop your feet on the pedals and coast or glide a little. Try a little bit more. And again.

**PEDAL**

Try pedalling a little when you are coasting.

**STOP**

Stop pedalling. Gently touch the brakes. Slow down until you feel it safe to put your feet on the ground - just before you think you might fall over.

**RIDE!**

Now you are free! Practice in open spaces like quiet car parks, and when you feel confident, try cycle paths. Cycle paths are a safe place to practice - Scotland has a great network of paved off-road paths, far from traffic.

Printed cycle maps are available from Sustrans and some local authorities. Cycle routes can also be plotted using CycleStreets (web and mobile app) which allows for options on quiet roads, and turn-by-turn instructions.

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[114x260]REMOVING

[114x250]PEDALS

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**DR BIKE’S HOW TO RIDE A BIKE**

PADDLE with your feet, both at a time. Pretend you are sitting on a scooter, or kicking on an office-chair. Do this a few times.

**ELEPHANTS**

As you paddle, count elephants between paddle “steps”. You are really counting how long you are comfortable balancing. By counting you are measuring progress.

8-12 ELEPHANTS

When you reach 8-12 elephants, take a break. Put the pedals back on the bike (see illustration).

**FEET**

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**START**

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