Bicycling, Adult Cyclists

Every day the average adult American drives almost 40 miles and spends an hour in the car. Forty percent of these trips are within two miles of the home. Over half the working population lives within 5 miles of the workplace.

Whether motivated by recreation or transportation, more adults are taking up cycling than ever before, reports the League of American Bicyclists.

Learning more about cycling greatly increases confidence. And it can be a great aid in learning to share the road more effectively, whether you are behind two wheels or one.

- Adult cyclists who are using their bicycle in different situations than they previously did - such as switching from occasional short recreational rides to regularly commuting to work - may want to:
  - Take a short workshop.
  - Join a bike club.
  - Get involved with their local bicycling community.
- Courses and workshops may focus on learning to race, long distance touring, teaching children to cycle safely, commuting, bike repairs, and more. Check with the League of American Bicyclists (www.bikeleague.org) for a listing of instructional opportunities available in your area. Or ask at your local bike shop.
- The adult cyclist should assess her or himself: How confident are you in your cycling skills? What would you like to know more about? Are there particular kinds of cycling you'd like to try out? With that in mind, adult cyclists may wish to check around their community for bike clubs, classes, rides, and other cycling opportunities that may be of interest to them.
- The adult cyclist should brush up on riding skills and rules if it has been a while since he or she cycled regularly.
- Adult cyclists who wish to cycle with small children, and cyclists needing to transport cargo, should investigate the various child seats and trailers available. Then determine which are the safest, and which will work best for them.
- Adult cyclists should learn more about off-road cycling, touring, and racing before participating in these activities. Adult cyclists are encouraged to try cycling on multi-use paths. But they should remember to respect others' needs on the trails.
- Even adult cyclists who maintain that they only cycle on paths or quiet streets should not underestimate the importance of wearing a helmet. Accidents can happen anywhere. Cyclists should always wear a helmet.
- Adult cyclists should learn how to handle harassment from motorists and others in traffic. As difficult as it may be, it's in the cyclist's best interest not to return any harassment or insults.
- Just like a car, a bicycle requires basic maintenance to keep running smoothly and safely. The adult cyclists should learn that bikes are easy to work on and that s/he can save money by learning bike maintenance themselves. This can be done by picking up a manual and taking a repair course. Those who really do not have time should keep their bicycles regularly serviced at a good bike shop.
- Adult cyclists should know the health and environmental benefits of bicycling. A great way is to learn how to substitute a short bike ride for many car trips and errands. Bicycling can fit into one's everyday life.

This information is courtesy of the New Hampshire Highway Safety Agency.
The laws may be different in your state. Be sure to know what they are and to respect them.

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