

Get Started Guide: Bicycling

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Let's Go For A Ride!

Thinking about riding a bike? This guide will prepare you for the journey. We've covered choosing the right bicycle, where to buy, where to ride & lots of other tips to making biking a regular part of your lifestyle.

Follow these basic tips to build fitness and enjoy your new favorite activity:

Start easy. Don't try to do too much right away. Begin with a low mileage goal—perhaps between 5 and 8 miles per ride—and add on a little each week.

Ride several days a week. This will not only build fitness but also help you get used to the bike.

Choose your routes wisely. At first, avoid big hills and advanced adventures.

Rest and recover. Rest is key to becoming a strong cyclist because the body needs time to rebuild after rides.

Cut it short. There will be good days and bad days. If you're struggling, take a shorter route.

Build community. Find a riding buddy who's also new to cycling.



Join a ride. Try your bike shop or a Lancaster Bicycle Club ride (look for a “no drop” ride so you don't get left behind).

Keep track. Whether you prefer a calendar, an app, or a designated journal, it's important to track your progress.



What's the Right Bike?

If you don't have a bike, don't worry! Our tips will help you find the right bike for a smooth ride.

Visit a Bike Shop

For a number of reasons, we recommend visiting a bike shop for your purchase. A good bike shop employs knowledgeable, helpful folks that use the products they sell. Their job is to help you find the right bike to fit your needs, as well as determine the correct size & features to make your ride comfortable.

Here are some things to think about before heading to a bike shop:

- Where are you going to ride?
- What is your budget?
- Will you ride at night?
- How often will you ride?
- Who will you ride with?
- Where will you store your bike?
- What do you want to bring with you?
- Will you ride for transportation, fitness, or both?

Local Bike Shops

Trek Bicycle Store
117 Rohrerstown Road
Lancaster, PA

Lancaster Bicycle Shop
1138 Manheim Pike
Lancaster, PA

Gretna Bikes
27 W. Lemon Street
Lancaster, PA

Radius Bike Shop
545 New Holland Avenue
Lancaster, PA

The Common Wheel
701 East King Street
324 N. Queen Street
Lancaster, PA

Lititz Bike Works
201 Rock Lititz Blvd #11
Lititz, PA



Bicycle safety is as simple as ABC:

A is for Air

B is for Brakes

C is for Crank & Chain

We never want to think about getting into a collision on a bicycle, but it's a reality that you need to consider.

You'll be safest if you make yourself as visible as possible. This includes brightly colored clothing and helmet, using lights that are visible even in daylight, and making sure your bicycle is equipped with reflectors.

It's also important to be sure your bike is in good working order before every ride. Just remember your ABCs:

Air: Make sure your tires are inflated to the proper level. Use a quality at-home floor pump to get the pressure just right.

Brakes: Check that your brake pads are not worn and that the brakes can stop the bike.

Crank & Chain: Make sure your crank arms are securely fastened to the bicycle and don't wobble. Make sure your chain is well-lubricated.





Places to Ride

Lancaster Bicycle Club

<http://lancasterbikeclub.net/>

SAMBA

<http://sambabiker.com/samba/>

Bicycling Magazine

<http://www.bicycling.com/>

The League of American Bicyclists

<http://www.bikeleague.org>

People for Bikes

<http://peopleforbikes.org>

Park Tool

<http://www.parktool.com/>

Take a Test Ride

Just like when you buy a new vehicle, you should test ride any bicycle you may buy.

We recommend trying a few different models at a couple of different bike shops to learn which type of bike suits you best. You should be offered the correct frame size for your ride, with the seat height adjusted to fit you properly.

On test ride day, wear clothes that you plan to ride in.

Avoid tight jeans, baggy clothes, and sandals or flip-flops.

Don't be afraid to take an extended test ride. Two laps around a parking lot may not be enough. Test the bike like you plan to use it.

About the Author: Jason Ingargiola

Jason is well-known in the Lancaster bike scene. He first became interested in bikes in college, relying on his Trek 7300 hybrid to carry him to class, grocery shopping, and long, leisurely rides. After college, Jason took up a car-free lifestyle for several years. Since arriving in Lancaster in 2010, he has worked at Lancaster Bicycle Shop and The Common Wheel, where he used his diverse skill set to educate and inspire a new generation of cyclists. In his time at The Common Wheel, he helped to organize social and fitness rides that still continue today, including the popular Slow Ride Lanc. Jason now manages the new Trek Bicycle Store in Lancaster, where he offers hands-on maintenance classes, organizes social and fitness rides, and advocates for improved cycling infrastructure in Lancaster County.

Thanks to Lancaster Rec for photos from Open Streets Lancaster.