

# Cycle Training For All



## Learn to Cycle – Further Skills Training

**SKILLS and CHALLENGES SHOULD ALWAYS BE WITHIN THE CYCLIST'S ABILITY TO AVOID CAUSING FRUSTRATION IN LEARNING**

For those who have taken part in a Learn-to-Cycle programme and can now cycle independently – what's next?

Moving on, the goal should be to focus on fundamental cycling skills and introductory road skills.

The 4 key cycling skills are **pedalling, balancing, cornering** and **stopping**, and focussing on exercises to build these will increase a cyclist's **bike handling skills**.

In addition to this, to help stay safe when cycling where there may be other traffic (bikes, people, vehicles) being able to cycle at an **appropriate speed**, to **look all around** and **be aware**, to **signal** intention to others in the area, and to be able to move on the bike to **avoid obstacles**, is essential.

1. While pedalling effectively is a necessary skill, knowing how NOT to pedal is equally important. Known as **FREE WHEELING**, the skill is to keep the feet ON THE PEDALS, without pushing (if feet come off the pedals with feet hanging in the air, balance is affected)

Try

- Pushing the pedals for a count of 4 pushes, then
- Freewheeling for 4
- Then back to pushing

This will also let those cycling experience how freewheeling **slows the bike**, while pedalling moves it along ... so freewheeling is one way to **CONTROL SPEED**

Try also

- Freewheeling between points
- Freewheeling until the bike comes to a stop and the rider needs to put their feet to the ground ... this will show how pedalling helps keep the bike upright and stable and that a certain speed is needed to keep the bike balanced
- Freewheeling also helps greatly in steadying a cyclist to assist with **SHOULDER CHECKING** and **SIGNALLING**

A good game to practise changing and controlling speed is "TRAFFIC LIGHTS"

- When GREEN is called, cyclists move round, making sure they are aware of other traffic ... travelling at an appropriate speed
- When ORANGE is called, cyclists need to slow down, by freewheeling and by small pulls on the back brake ... but no stopping or feet to the ground, until

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- RED is called, cyclists come to a quick, but safe, stop ... back brake, followed by front brake, sit on the saddle, feet to the ground, standing if the journey is finished
2. Being able to **SLOW** and **STOP SAFELY** is a vital skill
- pulling the back brake gently to slow
  - pulling the back brake fully first to stop
  - followed by front brake
  - stay sitting on the saddle
  - then feet to the ground
  - finally standing if the journey is finished

Quick stopping for an emergency

- hard on the back brake, followed by
- hard on the front brake
- STAY SEATED to keep the back wheel from lifting too much off the ground
- Feet on the pedals until the bike stops, then to the ground

Practise cycling and pulling the back brake gently on the first whistle ... feeling how the bike slows ... and cycling on again when the whistle blows again, without ever putting feet to the ground

Practise cycling to a point (line on the yard) and aiming to stop at that point

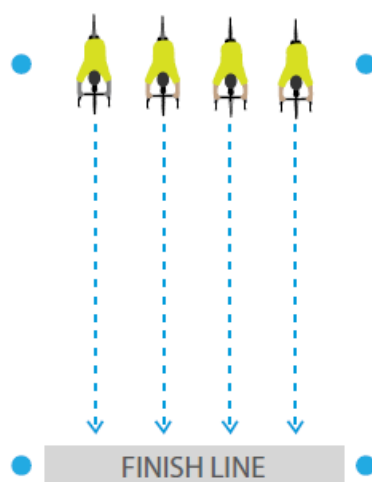
Practise stopping as quickly as possible after a whistle is blown

Try slow bike cycling, where the goal is to go as slow as possible without putting the feet to the ground – the technique here is to “see-saw” with very small touches back and forth on the pedals (pedalling pushes the bike forward), while at the same time making small movements to the handlebars to keep balance

Look ahead!

Standing off the saddle can help!

Then aim to do this in as straight a line as possible



3. Cyclists need to be able to **SIGNAL** to show where they want to go

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- Freewheel to steady
  - Then loosen grip on the handlebars until comfortable and confident
  - Then lift the hand an inch or two up from the handlebars until comfortable and confident
  - Gradually increase the lift, until the arm is stretching out sideways from the shoulder, palm of the hand facing forward
  - Once comfortable and confident, aim to hold the signal for 3-5 seconds' count
  - A SIGNAL SHOULD BE SLOW AND SMOOTH – trying to do it quickly causes wobble
  - Start pedalling again
  - Practise with both arms until comfortable and confident with either
4. **SHOULDER CHECKING** is also a very significant skill, as a key aspect of safety is all-round awareness
- Freewheel to steady
  - Look to the side while keeping the bike going straight by keeping the arms stretched long – ESPECIALLY THE ARM ON THE OTHER SIDE FROM THE LOOK – look left ... long right arm, look right ... long left arm
  - Look further, over the shoulder to see what's behind – practise both sides
  - Look over the shoulder for 2-3 seconds – practise both sides
  - Look back to see
    - A person behind with their hand held up or down – call up or down
    - A person behind holding up different colour cones – call the colour
5. Being able to go around a **CORNER** confidently and safely is very important – the three key phases to cornering are
- Approach
    - Slowing to the right speed (this will be slower in wet/slippery weather)
    - Getting the inside knee up – the one on the corner side – to avoid the kerbside pedal hitting the edge or the ground if the cyclist leans into the corner (in wet/slippery weather they will slowing more and staying upright rather than leaning in the corner)
    - **BACKPEDALLING** by pushing a pedal backwards lets the correct pedal come in to position without pushing the bike forward
  - Cornering
    - Letting the head lead (turn towards the corner) to look through the turn
    - Freewheeling to hold the pedal positions
    - Small, gradual movement to “feed” the handlebars through the corner – large, sharp pulling on the handlebars can cause a fall
  - Leaving the corner
    - Head looking ahead in the direction of travel
    - Coming out of the lean to sit upright again
    - Pushing on the up knee to propel the bike out of the corner

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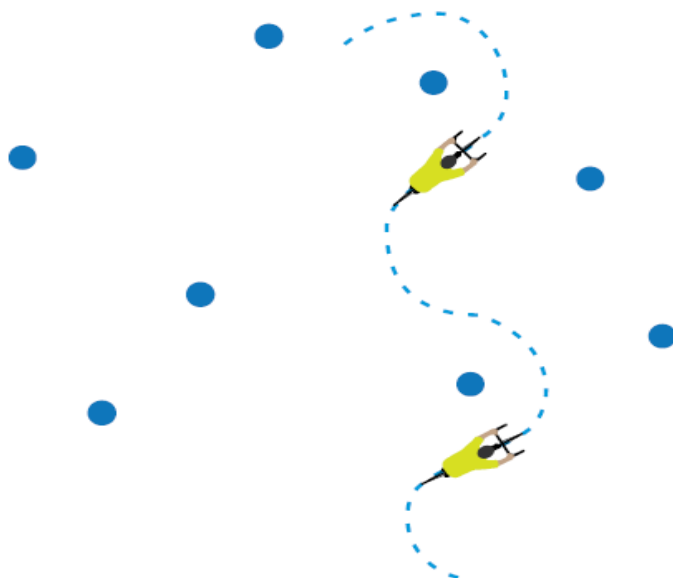


If there are lines marked on a yard space (basket ball court etc.), practise cycling the perimeter, aiming to keep close to or stay on the lines. Corner as described above. Practise in both directions.

Lay a circle of cones to cycle round for further practice in “feeding” the handlebars and looking through the bend.

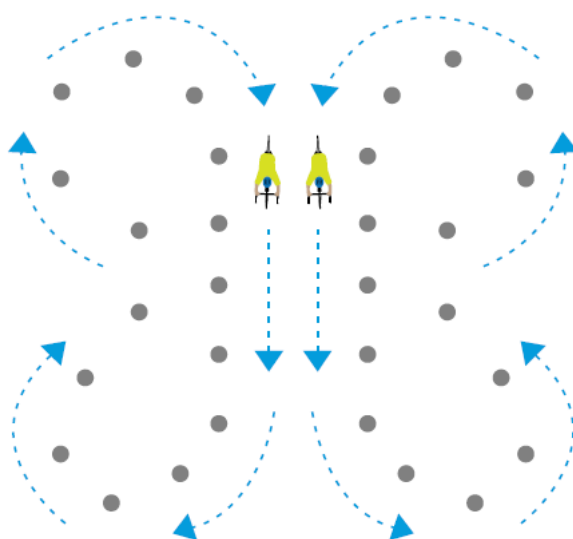
Practise in both directions, to increase difficulty, make the circle smaller or practise cycling the circle behind someone else without getting closer to them.

6. Being able to **CYCLE WITH OTHER PEOPLE** on bikes is very important for cyclists and allows them to experience the social aspect of the activity
  - The essential technique is to keep looking in the direction of traffic, as looking at a person beside can lead to collision, try the following
    - Follow the leader, aiming to keep the distance from the rider ahead, while copying what they do on the bike – emphasise NOT speeding up to match someone else’s speed



- Butterfly – cycling with others to form the shape of a butterfly, while looking to keep aligned with the opposite person

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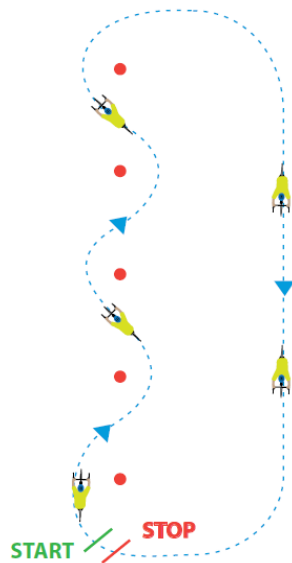


- Cycling in pairs with adults (for children) or group leaders/trainers
  - Side-by-side to chat
  - Front (cyclist) and back (other) to narrow up – cyclist 50 cm – 1m from edges (broken edge, kerb etc.), other 50 cm further out again to offer protection from behind NB Don't let wheels of each bike overlap in this format
  - Introduce signs – STOP and YIELD – drawn in chalk or mock signs for the pair to discuss, understand and incorporate while cycling

## 7. Cycling to **AVOID OBJECTS/OBSTACLES**

- With any cycling activity a cyclist may need to move round and avoid objects – practise this by
  - Slalom – in and out through cones, being sure to
    - Keep close to the cones being passed
    - Look at the next cone rather than the one beside
    - Small movements “feeding” the handlebars
- Increase difficulty by
  - Moving cones closer together (smaller space)
  - Offset cones to the sides (sharper turns)
  - Slalom in pairs (make sure cones are spaced to allow room)
  - Slalom with limits on the number of pedal pushes (to control speed)

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- Incorporate the slalom into an obstacle course
  - add a narrowing funnel leading to a gap to go through – emphasise the need to look at the space on the far side, not the cones making the gap
  - curved lines to cycle between
  - a circle of cones to cycle round
  - a square where the rider has to stop, get off, get back on again and restart

**Working on all the skills listed and building on them, will develop confidence and back-handling skills, all of which are essential to safe, assured cycling.**

**HAPPY CYCLING!!**